

**RELIGION AS CENTRAL PRINCIPLE IN THE SELECTED
WORKS OF T.S. ELIOT AND THOLKĀPPIAR:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY**

A Thesis

Submitted to Bharathiar University, Coimbatore in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the award of the degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY in ENGLISH

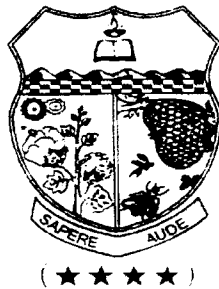
Submitted by

R. CHANDRASEKAR

Under the guidance of

Dr. S. SREE KUMAR

Reader in English (Retd.)



**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
GOVERNMENT ARTS COLLEGE(Autonomous)
(Affiliated to Bharathiar University)
COIMBATORE 641018, TAMIL NADU
INDIA**

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DECLARATION

I CHANDRA SEKAR. R hereby declare that the thesis, entitled "**RELIGION AS CENTRAL PRINCIPLE IN THE SELECTED WORKS OF T.S.ELIOT AND THOLKĀPPIYAR: A COMPARATIVE STUDY**", submitted to the Bharathiar University, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English is a record of original research work done by me during 2007 -2010 under the Supervision and Guidance of **Dr. S. SREE KUMAR**, Reader in English (Retd.),at Government Arts College, Coimbatore, and it has not formed the basis for the award of any Degree/ Diploma/ Associateship/Fellowship or other similar title of any candidate of any University.


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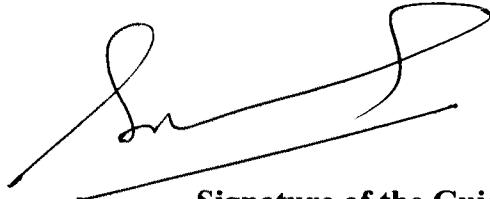
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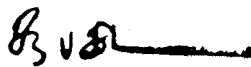
Countersigned.


Head of the Department
M. KARUNA MOORTHY
Head of The Department
Dept. of English
Govt. Arts College
Coimbatore 641 018.



Signature of the Guide

DR. S. SREE KUMAR
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D., Dip. in
Journalism
Reader in English
Govt. Arts College (Autonomous)
COIMBATORE - 18.



Principal

PRINCIPAL
Govt. Arts College (Autonomous)
Coimbatore - 641 018.



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(R. CHANDRASEKAR)

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EXPANSION OF THE ABBREVIATION USED IN THIS BOOK

E	-	Eḷuththu
S	-	Sol
P	-	Poruḷ
Aham	-	Ahaththiṇai; iyal; Ahaṇānūru
Kaḷavu	-	Kaḷavu iyal
Kali	-	Kalithokai
Puram	-	Puṛaththiṇai iyal; Puṛaṇānūru
Silambu	-	Silappathikāram
Thol	-	Tholkāppiyam
Meppādu	-	Meyppāttu iyal
SW	-	The Sacred Wood
SE	-	The Selected Essays
SP	-	Selected Prose

RL	-	Religion and Literature
Canka	-	Sangam(ancient)
MC	-	Murder in the Cathedral
FR	-	The Family Reunion
CP	-	The Cocktail Party
Notes	-	Notes towards the Definition of Culture
Lc & Phil.	-	Literary Criticism and Philosophy

Preface

PREFACE

Comparative Literature is the comparison between literature and other areas of knowledge and the belief which is an unquestionable academic sanction to any psychological study of a work of art. Psychology and criticism come together on the ground that belongs to the study of aestheticism. Criticism is an effective intellectual force to dispel falsehood and establish Truth. Serious criticism gravitates towards setting up high ideals for human pursuits. Eliot and Tholkāppiyar believed in such a dedicated undertaking of the concept and pursued it in this spirit.

Eliot and Tholkāppiyar's passion seems to standardize human thinking, art and criticism. Standard criticism depends upon standard thinking. It ultimately depends upon established norms and ideals. Eliot calls it in terms of 'religion' and Tholkāppiyar as 'a way of life' as the best part of Tradition. According to them, it is of standardizing human thinking and criticism with theological standards. These standards alone give a positive stay to humanity saving it from the suicidal pit of Secularism.

Social sciences take as substitutes for the religious principles. Such a fundamental awareness of the finality of the theological values of religion has led Eliot to give it a high place in art and criticism. It is this conviction that persuaded him to declare that literary standards are adequate to determine whether a work is literature; its greatness as literature must be measured by other standards.

The aim of this study is to set forth the validity of the statements of Eliot and Tholkāppiyar's efforts in practicing it unconsciously in Tholkāppiyam in the ancient time. In doing so, several issues are encountered with the evaluatory criticism, the archetypal, the various cross-currents versus religion and a fresh look at Formalism in its comprehensive meaning with solid questions about human experience, human ideas and attitudes of life.

Chapter 1 prepares the ground defining Comparative Literature and different schools of comparative studies. It points out why the researcher has taken interest in Thomas Stearns Eliot from the American school and Tholkāppiyar, whose era is almost unknown, from his native land to get it fit for comparison. It introduces Eliot as a critic, and playwright and his own formulated theories and introducing Tholkāppiyar and his book Tholkāppiyam – its three divisions – *Eluthu*, *Sol* and *Porul* and focuses broadly on the land, language and literature. It depicts about the people who were united linguistically, racially, culturally and religiously to achieve great in the civilized humanity.

Chapter 2 deals with an argument by considering criticism as a means to Truth and studying the definition of literary criticism and dwelling upon the usefulness of evaluatory system of criticism in assessing a work of art by recalling the evaluations of the past. It justifies that the makers of literatures are always in close touch with the nature and nature of livelihood.

Chapter 3 defines Form and Content and how they are relevant and need for our study. Tholkāppiyar focuses '*Porul*' to the theme of literature. It proves Art

serves to defend human rights and it has fought against the tyranny of despotic rules. Literature assures immortality to any language and enriches our life. So as, it is projected vividly with the codes of life of Tamils, few common men as depicted in Tholkāppiyam and in few poetic dramas of Eliot since literature is intimately related to Sociology which is indispensable and interdependent.

Chapter 4 plans to look at Eliot's views on religion as detective norms to identify the greatness of literature. It sees the nearness of religion and literature more than that of ethics. Religion is seen as an archetype. It speaks of the close intimacy between religion and culture. It speaks of how secularism in literature has denigrated it and reflects on the Higher Principle and the contemplation of the Pure-Being and the Ultimate Reality. Discussion on the art- experience and life-experience is essential to creation of literature. It concludes by studying these authors' own religious convictions and their bearings on his idea of culture, life-nature and criticism.

Chapter 5 sums up Tholkāppiyar's observation on the way of common people's belief in god and Eliot's has the same view of God fearing among the creation of his common characters. Eliot has verdict on the indispensability of extra-aesthetic criteria in a work of art to decide it great or not. The verdict relates to the demands of formalistic principles of literary criticism and their closeness in literature. And in this way, how Tholkāppiyar and Eliot urge the literary world to stick towards religion to make it its central principle of value and evaluation and the high quality of human experience, human ideas and attitudes make literature great.

Chapter I

T.S. Eliot and Tholkappiar – an Introduction

CHAPTER I
T.S.ELIOT AND THOLKÄPPIAR
AN INTRODUCTION

Comparative Literature originated in France and it was an outcome of the interest of French scholars in finding the impact of their culture on European Literature. Gradually it developed in its scope and method, and now it has become an important subject of the era. The French scholars who were the beginners of the field paid much importance to the literature aspect of the term. They were interested in collecting the data such as the influence of their literature on the works of foreign writers and the reception of French writers abroad. Therefore they favoured the study of factual and verifiable contacts of writers, their works and their readers in different languages. Thus the Comparative study was on mere historical survey and was devoid of aesthetic disciplines. The French, moreover, were not in favour of the extensions of the domain of 'Comparative Literature' to cover other areas of knowledge.

The American scholars have laid emphasis on the 'Comparative' aspect of the term. Henry H.H. Remak defines 'Comparative Literature' is a study of Literature beyond the confines of one particular country and the study of relationships between literature on the one hand and other areas of knowledge and beliefs on the other.

The Russian school of comparatists believes that literature is a social property though it is created by individual artists. It belongs to the state which has the ultimate control over the artist. The creative artists witness the social happening and present a realistic account of what they experience as a result and the comparatists probe into

such realistic considerations and assess the kind and variety of social realism which forms the root spirit of Russian school of Comparatives. The School distinguishes between typological analogies and cultural imports when they investigate into the external sources of the different works and their similarities and dissimilarities. The traditional objection to Soviet approach is that it neglects the aesthetic aspect of literature, ignores the spontaneity of the human mind and it refuses to give credit to the individual artist.

Hence, it is understood, Comparative literature is the study of world literature without specific regard to national or linguistic boundaries. It deals the relationships among different literatures. The Comparative Studies deal not only with the international literary masterpieces and historical periods of the world literature but also examines critical theories from a cross- cultural perspective. It promotes the understanding of world literatures and cultures in special concern for the relationships among the present with a special concern for the relationships among the languages and literatures of various civilizations.

The study of literature helps to achieve a mature understanding of themselves and the world and to learn to read critically and analytically, write clearly and persuasively, and reason sanely and soundly. It leads investigation of literature in ways which go beyond particular national or linguistic boundaries. Comparative literary studies are of two main kinds; substantive studies of the literature of two or more languages or literary cultures; and generalizing studies of the literary process itself, for example literary history, the sociology of literature, philosophy and literature. Cultural studies look at cultural texts, spaces and practices, including texts

that are not normally included in the canon of high literature and studies these in relation to the various social, historical and ideological contexts in which cultures manifest themselves.

Comparative literature in the broadest manner deals with the manifold interrelations of literatures with the theory of literature, with movements, genres, periods, and authors from the earliest times to the present. The genres offer an extremely faithful field of investigation to the comparatists. Modern genre theory is descriptive. It allows mixed and new kinds of forms and techniques. A valuable genre study is that it calls attention to the integral development of literature. It must be theoretical and define the formal characteristics. Hence, the writers are constantly in search of new form of expression.

The subject of genre raises questions in literary criticism. According to Wellek and Warren, such a study is essential since it puts, in a specifically literary context, the philosophical questions concerning the relations of the class of the individuals composing it. Its character is shaped by the aesthetic convention to which it belongs. It is an institution through which one can express, create new ones or reshape it. It is a principle of order which seeks to classify literature not by time or place, but by literary types in terms of organization and structure. The generic theory is based on the assumption that every work belongs to a kind and every work stands in close relationship with other works. Genres are not static and their classification shifts with the addition of new works.

Critical theory signifies a number contemporary approaches to textual and cultural criticism, hermeneutics, structuralism, semiotics, post structuralism, theories of ideology, psychoanalytic theory, and so on.

Literature is intimately related to Sociology. Literature is not only the effect of Social causes; it is also the cause of social effects. It has themes and problems that emerge from group activities and group situations and its significance lies in the extent to which it expresses and enriches the totality of the culture. The range of social influences on literature is a system of social organization, and the deeply rooted institutions, the dominant ideas, the characteristic emotional tone, the sense of the past and the pattern of the future, the driving aspirations and myths, and their relation to the contemporary realities. The relation between literature and society is highly complex and the relation between the producer of literature and his public is never static. This relation varies from society to society; it constantly changes throughout history. It is very difficult to determine which element of society has exerted what influence on literature. The tie-ups between the art, the artist and the society become common. The critics too believe in the direct connection between literature and the social structure, or the spirit of the age.

Art serves to defend human rights; it has fought against the tyranny of despotic rules, slavery, untouchability and many other social evils, so artistic creation is one of the ways of reflecting reality and at the same time, of perceiving and apprehending reality. If this is accepted, the artist accepts its moral standards and finds on observing social actualities, much cause for lamentation, satire and fear. Hence, a writer is intimately concerned with human life and its manifold problems. All great literature

has a civilizing effect on the readers. It is a vehicle of rational thought and it is essentially an uplifting power enabling man to enjoy life and endure it, thus contributing to the art of living. Keeping these in the mind, the researcher takes few works of T.S. Eliot and the oldest book Tholkāppiam in Tamil literature for his comparative study.

Tholkāppiam is a monumental work of Tamil which deals with the science of language and literature with a picture of Tamilnadu. It was not popular even among the Tamils till recently. After the renaissance movement of Tamil gained ground, there arose an abiding interest and a burning desire in the hearts of the Tamils in the study of ancient Tamil classics.

It is firmly believed that the name Tholkāppiam is derived from Tholkāppiyan - the name of the author of the book. Based on this view, the name of the author, Tholkāppiyan, must be derived from the name of the family – *Kāppiyakkudi*. If it is so, every member of the family would have the name *Kāppiyan*. Then it would lose the value of the proper name of the particular individual. Tholkāppiyan could not be the proper name of the author of the book – Tholkāppiam. No author would call his book by his name. The authors of Tamil books in ancient Tamil Nadu would never do so, as they were the embodiments of modesty. It is quite natural for others to call a book by the author's name. But it could not be the original name of a book.

The name Tholkāppiam must be the original name of the book. It means-one that preserves the legacy of the old. The author thinks that his book would protect the Tamil language and culture from decay and deformation, in the succeeding

generations owing to various reasons and would have aptly styled it as Tholkāppiyam. Then the author of the book Tholkāppiyam came to be known as Tholkāppiyar-meaning the author of Tholkāppiyam. The introductory verse of a great scholar Panamparanar also indicates that the author of Tholkāppiyam was called “Tholkāppiyar” because of the book he wrote after the publication of the great work. In course of time this name “Tholkāppiyar” became popular and his original proper name was possibly forgotten. So it is to be concluded that the name of the book is Tholkāppiyam and its author is being called after the name of the book as Tholkāppiyar – the author of Tholkāppiyam.

The age of Tholkāppiyar is a disputed one. To fix it convincingly to all is a hard task for anyone who wants to be unbiased in his approach. Finding out his age correctly will certainly help the historians to write the true history of Tamil Nadu in South India. History begins in the South of India not with the advent of the Āryans as in the words of Prof. Nīlakanta Sāstri, “Attention has been concentrated too long the North, on Sanskrit books and on Indo- Āryan nations” (65). Prof. Sundaram Pillai has said, “The scientific historian of India ought to begin his study with the basis of the *Krishnā*, of the *Kāvēri*, of the *Vaikai* rather than with the *Gangetic plain*, as has been now long, too long the fashion”(43). The author of Tholkāppiyam seems to be a grammarian, linguist, poet, philosopher, historian and sociologist.

Tholkāppiyar is to be considered as the saviour of the Tamil language and culture from degeneration and deformation due to the growing influence of Sanskrit and its culture. His age is fixed varying from 5320 B.C. to 500 A.D. In the introductory verse to

Tholkāppiyam, Panamparanar, his co-student and friend, praised Tholkāppiyar as “Tholkāppiyar well-versed in *Aindram*” and he has given clue to his age in the book, “*Aindram niṛaidha Tholkāppiyam – Pāyiram*”. *Aindram* is supposed to be a grammatical work. The study of *Aindram* was very popular during the time of Tholkāppiyar and his Tholkāppiyam was neglected during the time of Iḷaṅgo Adigaḷ, the author of Silappathikāram. From the Sanskrit sources, it is to be learnt that *Aindram* lost its influence after the appearance of Astādhyayi, the grammar of Pāṇini which became very popular ever since its inception and was learnt eagerly. If Tholkāppiyar lived in the age posterior to Panini, he might have studied the grammar of Panini, and would not go for a work which lost its hold upon the scholars. So, Tholkāppiyar might have lived in an age anterior to Panini and is being fixed varying from 700 BCE. to 350 BCE.

Dr.K.K. Pillai assigns a later date to Tholkāppiyam. He says: “The commonly accepted view of anterior date of Tholkāppiyam has been recently challenged by a few writers. The picture it provides seems to be of a slightly later epoch than that of the *Sangam* classics. There is more of Sanskrit influence in it than in some of the *Sangam* works. The caste divisions and the religious beliefs pertain to a later date. But these are sought to be explained by possible interpolations into the original text. However the *Akapporuḷ* works describe *kalaviyaḷ* in active operation. Tholkāppiyam on the other hand, while laying down the features of *Kalaviyaḷ* records its decline and abandonment. It suggests politically about the existence of four principal kingdoms, which as the annotators comprised the *Pāṇḍiyamandalam*, *Malaïmandalam*, *Cholamandalam*, and *Thondaimandalam*, is the picture of *Tamiḷakam*. When

Pallavās did not emerge as a fourth power in TamilNādu., as period in which the three great kings *Sera*, *Sola* and *Pāndiyar* ruled over the Tamil country and a period which was the halcyon days of ancient Tamil Nadu of Pre-Christian Era in which Tholkāppiyar might have lived.

There are interpolations in Tholkāppiyam and such verses of doubtful authenticity and the wrong interpretations of some verses led to assign a later date to Tholkāppiyam. There are evidences to prove the Sanskrit reference, but not the Sanskrit influence in Tholkāppiyam. P.S.S.Sastriyar holds the view “Tholkāppiyānar was conversant with the *Vedas*, *Dharmasāstrās*, *Kāmasutrā*, early *Alankara* literature, the source book of *Natyasāstrā*, *Prātisākhya*s, works on *Vyākaraṇā*, *Niruktā* etc. in Sanskrit literature and made use of them in planning Tholkāppiyam”(272). So, he assigned the 2nd Century.B.C.E.to Tholkāppiyar. The possibility of a question arises as how Tholkāppiyar, a Tamil, could have been conversant with all these Sanskrit works in his time. Even for a person of the sacerdotal community, it is quiet impossible to have sufficient knowledge of all these works. If Tholkāppiyar really made use of them in planning this work, he would have expressed it openly, and Panamparanār also might have referred to such knowledge of Tholkāppiyar as he did in the case of *Aindram*. The planning of Tholkāppiyam is entirely original and not based on any of the Sanskrit works. Therefore the views of the learned Dr.Sastriyar remain passive.

Prof. Vellaivarananar says in “*Iranyānār Akapporuḷ*” that the upper limit of the period of Tholkāppiyar is 5320 B.C.E. on the ground of the account of three Tamil

Sangams (105). It is said by Panamparanār in his introductory verse that Tholkāppiyam was brought before the learned assembly in the court of *Nilamtharunthiruvīn Pāndiyan* under the presidency of *Athañkottu Āsān* for criticism and approval. If Tamil Sangam was in existence at the time of Tholkāppiyar, Tholkāppiyam also might have been brought before the Tamil Sangam for approval as was the procedure for publishing new book after the formation of Tamil Sangam. The fact that such procedure was not adopted in the case of Tholkāppiyam proves that there was no Tamil Sangam formed in his time. So it is to be concluded that Tholkāppiyar might have lived in the Pre-Sangam age. Obviously there was no question of his name being associated with the Sangam at all. Therefore the conclusion of Prof. Vellaivaranar regarding the age of Tholkāppiyar on the basis of Sangam-account loses the value of accuracy. Now it is our duty to enquire into internal evidences to establish his age corroborating the conclusion arrived at by the statement of Panamparanār. It is to be found in Tholkāppiyam that the prescription of rules of two kinds. One kind pertains to the statement made by himself and other to the statement of his predecessors quoted by him.

The first verse “*Eḷuththu enappadupa*” is the statement of his predecessors quoted by him and the second verse “*avaithām*” is his own statement. This way of laying down prescriptions helps us to find out his age.

The rule in Tholkāppiyam is regarding the borrowing of the Sanskrit words that found to have been enjoined by Tholkāppiyar himself. So, it is to be known that the words of the Sanskrit language found a way into the Tamil language during the

period of Tholkāppiyar only. If it had happened in the age preceding him, the rule might have been formed by his predecessors and he would not have failed to say. He is the first grammarian to make rule regarding the use of Sanskrit words in Tamil. It makes clear that the advent of the Aryans into the South took place during the age of Tholkāppiyar.

Prof. Nīlakanta Sāstri says, “Thus it is evident that starting somewhere about 1000 B.C.E the movement of the Aryans into the South proceeded more or less steadily and peacefully, and had reached its completion some time before the establishment of the Mauriyan Empire which included in its fold all India except the extreme South” (67). Thus it is evident that the upper limit of the age of Tholkāppiyar is 1000 B.C.E. In Tholkāppiyam there is not to be found any reference to Jainism and Buddhism. The attempt of Prof. Vaiyapuri Pillai to prove that Tholkāppiyar is a Jain is far-fetched and fanciful. Prof. Vellaivarananar discussed the viewpoints of Vaiyapuri Pillai in detail and maintained that Tholkāppiyar lived some hundred years before the age of Buddha. So the lower limit of the age of Tholkāppiyar may be taken as 600 B.C.E. the age of Buddha.

Tholkāppiyam has its references to measures and weights, gold and other metals, but no reference is found about coins. So it is to be noted that Tholkāppiyar might have lived prior to the age in which coins were introduced. Basham, the historian says that the coinage might have been introduced towards the end of 600 B.C.E. through the Persian influence. Therefore the age of Tholkāppiyar was not later than the 6th Century B.C.E. So, as the result of our enquiry, it is possible to

conclude that Tholkāppiyar might have lived in the age between 1000 B.C.E. and 600 B.C.E. It may be somewhere about 800 B.C.E or 700 B.C.E. The following are the internal evidences to prove the antiquity of Tholkāppiyam.

In Sangam literature there are many pure Tamil words which have 'Sa' as the first letter. But Tholkāppiyar says that 'Sa' will not occur as the first letter of a word. From the verse 64 in *Eluththu* it is to be learnt that there was not a word with 'na' as first letter. But in Sangam literature the word '*namali*' is found. So we may conclude that Tholkāppiyar might have lived in an age when the words which have 'Sa' and 'na' as initial were not in use. Initially, in ancient *Sangam* Literature there are references to Greeks and the Romans who were called as *Yavanars*. The word *Yavanar* is supposed to be derived from the Greek word '*Ionion*'.

It is an accepted rule that if a foreign word finds common usage in the language, it is absorbed in the language and rules are formed regarding its usage. Even Tholkāppiyar has made mention of it in the verse 401 in the chapter *Sol*. While the later grammarian Pavaṇandhi, finding the word *Yavanar* used in *Sangam* literature, has made rules regarding its usage. Since Tholkāppiyar has not done so, it is clear that Tholkāppiyar must have lived in an age when this word was not in use. It must have come only after the age of Tholkāppiyar.

The specifically Indian products-rice and sandalwood-were known to the Greeks only by their Indian, Tamil names. As direct link between India and Babylon had ceased after 480 B.C.E, these products must have been imported to Babylon

much earlier so as to have reached Greece by about 460 B.C.E and become familiar at Athens in the time of Sophocles who mentions them.

Prof. Vaiyāpuri Pillai says “Tholkāppiyar uses the word ‘ōrai’ (Sanskrit *Hora*) which is a Greek word borrowed in Sanskrit astrological works about third or fourth century C.E.”(14) and he quotes it to support his view of assigning 500 B.C.E. to Tholkāppiyar. He was misled by the commentary of Naccinārkkiniyar who gives the meaning of the word ‘ōrai’ as ‘irāsi’ in Tholkāppiam, (*Poruḷ* 135(558) a sign of the ‘zodic’. But the word ‘ōrai’ in the verse under reference means a game played by the lover and his loved. It does not denote the hour as supposed by Vaiyāpuri Pillai. It is entirely different from the word ‘*Hora*’ in form and content. There are many verses for which no example can be cited from the old Sangam literature now available. This fact also proves its great antiquity. Thus the age of Tholkāppiyar is found to be of high antiquity in the century coming between 1000 B.C.E. and 600 B.C.E. i.e. probably 700 B.C.E.

Tholkāppiyar has divided his work into three books which are styled as *Eḷuthu*, *Sol* and *Poruḷ*. Each book contains nine chapters. The book *Eḷuthu* deals with Phonology of Tamil language and the book on *Sol* deals with morphology of the Language. The book on *Poruḷ* deals with the themes and forms of literature. The Tamil word *Poruḷ* here means ‘that which is important in life’. The literature was highly valued by the ancient Tamils for leading a happy and useful life. So it was considered as the important one (*Poruḷ*) of life. Its nine chapters are,

<i>Akatthiṇai Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on the conduct of love affairs.
<i>Puratthiṇai Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on the conduct of affairs other than love
<i>Kaḷavu Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on Secret love
<i>Karpu Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on Wedded love
<i>Poruḷ Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on 'Poruḷ'
<i>Meyppāttu Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on the exhibition of Psychic feelings
<i>Uvama Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on Simile or Comparison
<i>Seyyiḷ Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on Prosody
<i>Marapu Iyal</i>	:	The chapter on Usage of words

The total verses come to 1571(i.e. *Eḷuththu* 483 *Sol* 463 and *Poruḷ* 625) excluding the interpolations. Of these 57 of *Eḷuththu*, 72 of *Sol* and 158 of *Poruḷ*, 287 in all, indicate that they quote the views of others who preceded Tholkāppiyar.

The books on *Eḷuththu* and *Sol* appear to be compact and their verses are knit together one by one, the subject of each chapter being dealt with cogently. These two books deal with the study of language. It seems that nobody was interested in the study of language in the Middle Ages in which the interpolations were inserted. But the third one, the book on *Poruḷ*, deals with the literature and sociology. The influence of Sanskrit was very great during the middle ages. Sanskrit was the language of the religion, court and culture. Tamil, the language of the people, was relegated to the background and its study was neglected. The scholars tried to have the rules of Sanskrit grammar forced upon the Tamil language. The kings adopted the customs and manners of Sanskrit people and made the Sanskrit codes, as the Codes of

Tamil people. Here, it is necessary to know about the Tamils. The history of the ancient Tamils is still unknown to the world. Even the Tamils do not know their own history. The history of Tamil Nadu is not given prominence in the history of India. The historians of India are quite ignorant of ancient Tamil Nadu. They may say that they are not in possession of materials which depict the ancient history of Tamil Nadu. They are not informed of Tholkāppiyam which serves as a store-house of materials for writing the history of ancient Tamils.

The history of ancient Tamils depicted by Tholkāppiyam may be divided into the following chapters:

Land of Tamil Nadu

The people of Tamil Nadu

Social life

Religious life

Political life

Language and literature

Land of Tamil Nadu: Panampāranār in his introductory verse to Tholkāppiyam says that Tamil land lies between *Vēṇkadam* (Which is identified with Thiruppathi hills at present) on the North and *Kumari* on the South. *Kumari* is said to be a mountain submerged into the Indian Ocean after the age of Tholkāppiyar on the basis of reference found in Silappathikāram. (Varatharajan 48). So it is to be concluded that the boundaries of East, South and West are the seas, named *Kuṇakadal* (eastern sea), *Kumari* and *Kudakadal* (western sea) respectively. *Kumari* is called “*dreadful kumari*”.

Tamil Nadu is called “*Thamiḷ Kūruṇallulakam*” (the good part of the world where Tamil is spoken). As there is no reference to Ceylon of the present day in the introductory verse of Panamparanār or in the text of Tholkāppiyam, it (Ceylon) might have formed part of the main Tamil Land. There are references in the Sangam Literature about the deluge and the submergence of land, south of Tamil Nadu into the sea. (*Kalithokai*-104 (192))

Tamil Nadu is divided into twelve parts (*Sol* 400 (142)). The geographical state is not different from that of present day. The mountains, the forests, the rivers and the fauna and flora continue to be the same. It seems that the land is recognized in the geographical divisions also as the world of forest, the world of mountain, the world of water and the world of sea-shore which are termed *Mullai*, *Kuṟiṇḷi*, *Marutham* and *Neythal* respectively. (*Poruḷ* 5(153)). There seems to be no desert. The animal kingdom also appears to be not different from the present.

People: All are Tamils. The word ‘Tamil’ is referred in the text of Tholkāppiyam. The people are called Tamils because of the language (Tamil) they speak. The language gives the name to the people and not the people to the language.

Prof.V.K. Ramachandra Dikshitar says, “It is not patriotism that drives us to his conclusion, for in the opinion of Sir Harry John stone, India was most probably the land of the original man. We hold that it was the Southern part of the Indian continent”(12). So, the theory that Tamils came from outside India and settled here falls to the ground, The Tamils are the sons of the soil. The people are called by the names of regions. Tholkāppiyar has given only two names of them which are *Āyar*

(Shepherds) and *Vēttuvar* (Hunters). It appears from verse 165 of *Sol* that the people were designated also by their land, family, group, profession, possession and culture.

It is traditionally said that the people in the *Mullai* are called *Āyar*, the people of *Kuṟiñji*, *Vēttuvar* or *Kuṟavar*, the people of *Marutham*, *Uḷavar* and the people of *Neythal*, *Parathavar*. There is no reference in Tholkāppiyam to the last mentioned two.

There are professional names which denote kings, ministers, leaders, teachers, seers, scholars, merchants, musicians, dancers, actors, warriors, servants and maids. There are references to *Āndhanar*, *Pārppār* and *Ayyar* who are taken to be *Brahmins* by some scholars. It seems to be wrong. *Āndhanar* are those who are philosophers and *Pārppār* are those who are seers and research scholars. The word *Pārppār* literally means one who sees. These who are seeing books always – studying always – are called *Pārppār*. After the advent of Aryans into the South, the *Brahmins* of *Ārya Varnasrama* systems are identified with the Tamil *Pārppār*. But both belong to entirely different cadre. The *Brahmins* are recognized by birth and *Pārppār* by profession. The word *Āyyar* is used to denote the leaders of society. Of late, *Brahmin* caste is in the custom of suffixing this word *Āyyar* to their names as a mark of their caste. And, there is no mention of caste by birth.

Social Life: Tholkāppiyam reveals greatly the social advancement of Tamils. The aim of life seems to be far well advanced and worth having even to-day and for ever. *Tholkāppiyar* puts forth the aim of life thus:

“After the enjoyment of love is fulfilled, being surrounded by the pleasure-giving children and having the virtuous relatives with them, the husband and wife must perform what is best for the world and die for it; this is the way of reaping benefit of this life” (*Porul* 192(201)). So it is evident that all are accepted to lead the virtuous life, aiming to achieve great things which benefit others as well as themselves. Married life is the order of the day. There seems to be no vow of celibacy. The unit of society is the family of which, the husband and wife are the joint partners bound by true love.

The historian Basham says “that Varna came to the Dravidian South comparatively late for the earliest Tamil literature shows a society divided into tribal groups with little sense of the precedence of one over the other”(138).

Tholkāppiyam, the earliest among the existing Tamil works depicts a society, which is well developed and cultured and which is divided not into tribal groups but into organized professionals. The division of land into geographical regions is not to be taken as a sign of tribalism. Untouchability, inapproachability and unshadowability are unknown to them.

Family: The establishment of the family system is the true mark of civilization. The marriage by love and consent of the partners concerned is considered the best form of marriage pertaining to the society of culture and civilization.

Husband and wife are the main partners of the family. Both are united by marriage which is a matter of self-choice on the basis of love only. The lovers will meet together because of destiny (93(175)). Their eyes speak to one another in their meeting (96(176)). Tholkāppiyar seems to be well aware of the eight systems of

marriage of *Āryās* and compares the love-marriage of Tamils to the *Kāndharva* marriage of *Āryas* (92(175)).

The partners are expected to be on the same status having equality in nativity, family trait, strength, age, the means of enjoying love, chastity, graciousness, understanding and wealth (273(217)). The marriage will take place with the consent of the parents. If the parents of the bride object to their marriage the lady-love will elope with the lover who will conduct the marriage in his place (15&143(155&189)). It appears that the parents of the bride-groom will not object to his choice of his partner. The marriage is to be conducted with a ceremony in accordance with their family tradition. The elders of their family or community will conduct the marriage. Tholkāppiyar uses the word *Karaṇam* to denote the marriage ceremony. It implies the system of recording the marriage in writing also (145(189)). The lover may be superior in some respects when compared with his lady-love (93(175)). But after the marriage both become equal. So they are called *Thalaivan* (Headman) and *Thalavi* (Head-woman). The wife is not in any way subordinate to her husband. The women enjoy full freedom and equality with men.

The marriage is called *karpu* which means chastity, for the marriage ensures their chastity and binds them to observe the rules of moral code in their relation with the people of their opposite sex. When the male is not able to secure the love of the girl whom he loves, he may resort to the ordeal of riding over the horse made of palmyra-stems. The female is not allowed to do so when she fails to secure the hand of the person whom she loves.

The love of a male towards a young girl who is not mature to reciprocate his love, the love which is forced upon an unwilling maid, the love of aged persons and the love exhibited excessively without mutual reciprocity are all detested by the society. The friend of the lover, the maid and the foster-mother of the lady-love, the musician and his wife, the servants, the guests, the actors, the dancing girls, the scholars and those who happen to mean them unexpectedly are considered as persons who play a prominent role in the conduct of family life, before and after marriage(193(201). For the successful leading of the married life the lady is expected to have self-restraint, chastity, uprightness, impartiality, knowledge and dearness '*arumai*' (209(205).

Entertaining the guest, supporting the relatives, having tolerance in dealing with others and being self-content are considered as the chief characteristics of the wife (152(196). The custom of marrying second wife and having concubines was also prevalent (151,172&187(196,199). The concubines are called *kāmaḷaththi* and *Paraththai*. *Kāmaḷaththi* literally means the love-lady. So the word denotes that she is having the status of wife but not having the legal right upon his property. She is allowed to live in the house of her lover. The case of *Paraththai* is different. She will live in a separate house in a separate street. He will go to her house and stay with her. But it is enjoined that he must return to his house for living with his wife during the period of twelve days immediately after the menstruation (187(201) for the sake of reproduction. The knowledge of ancient Tamils in eugenic science is to be appreciated.

Child-Birth: The birth of children is welcomed. The natural outcome of the marriage is the birth of children. As they are well-versed in the science of eugenics, they are able to find out the period of conception and to have the child-birth at their control.

The children are considered as source of pleasure and not of burden. They play prominent role in dispelling the *udal* (love-quarrel) which may occur between the husband and wife occasionally (147(192)).

Education: The course of education seems to be divided into three systems which are the general education, the professional education and the research or advanced education. After having general education in their village or town, they go away from their homes for having professional or research education for a period of three years (188 (201)). The professional education is called *Vēnita kalvi* – the education which is needed for leading the life and the study of research called *Ōthal*, the continuous study.

It seems from the verse 31 in *Poruḷ* that the best among the lot are sent for research study. Incidentally it is to be observed that education is not meant for securing jobs in government services. They may remain away from their homes after marriage for a period of three years for having professional education and research study. So it is to be inferred that the centers for imparting professional education and research study are situated in certain important places suitable for such education. The persons who possess high academic qualifications are selected for the posts of ambassadorship (26(156)). There are commissioned services in the military and civil

departments. (25, 41 (56-158). The services are commissioned on behalf of the ruler is called *Vēndhuṟu thoḷil*. It is a foreign service limited to a period of one year (189(201). They used to go to foreign countries crossing the sea. They are not allowed to have their wives with them when they happen to cross the sea and stay in war-camps (34(157).

Pastimes: They are known to bath in the river and the tank and sitting and playing in the park as pastimes (191(201). The conveyances, they used, are chariot, the elephant and the horse (212(206). The musicians, actors and dancing women are the members of the family(193(201) and the musical instrument ‘*Yāl*’.

Ceremonies : The birth of a child, marriage and death are the occasions for conducting ceremonies. The ceremony conducted after the birth of a child is called *Neyyaṇi Muyakkam* (147(192). The marriage ceremony is called *Karṇam*(142(189). The birth day is called *Perumaṅgalam*(91(173). The coronation day of the king was celebrated every year and it was called *maṇṇumangalam* (91(173). The death of a hero on the battle field was celebrated with pomp and splendor. A stone after passing through six stages of ceremonies was erected in his honour (60(164).

Widow and widower: The widowhood is called *Thāpatham*. It seems that the lady after the death of her husband is not entitled to remarry (79(170). The husband also is to remain without remarriage after the death of his wife. The state of a widower is called *Thāputham* (79(170-171). The *thāpatham* means that the state of self-sacrifice and the *Thāputham*, the state of having lost the wife. These two words indicate that the wife who lost her husband must have led a life of penance and

the husband who lost his wife is not expected to sacrifice anything but to remain a widower.

***Palai* or the death of the wife:** There is a reference in Tholkāppiyam to the fact that the wife plunged into the cremation fire caused for burning the body of her husband, paying no heed to the advice of the elders for not doing so (79(170). The commemoration of this occurrence in literature is called *pālai nilai*. So it is to presume that such occurrences were rare and no lady was forced to die with her husband as was done in North India.

Everyone expected to excel in his activities. Tholkāppiyar says that it is to improve one's own avocation without being a hindrance to others with great distinction (74(168). The society seems to have been divided into many divisions on the basis of functions.

The commentators have interpreted this verse having in view the social structure of Aryan-society of the later period. The society of North India as revealed in the post Vedic literature differs from that of Tamil Nadu of Tholkappiyar age. In North India, the society seems to have been divided into four divisions only. They are *Brāhmins*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaisya* and *Sūdra*. The number of avocations of these four differs from those of their supposed counter-parts of Tamil Nadu as shown hereunder.

Aryans-Post Vedic Age	Number of Avocations	Tamils Tholkappiyar age	Number of Avocations
Brāhmana	3	Parppanar	6
Kshatriya	9	Arasar	5
Vaisya	4	Vanikar	6
Sūdra	7	Velalar	6

The first three of the *Āryan* Society have the following duties in common in addition to the above: *Adhyana* (Study), *Ijya* (Sacrifice) and *Dhāna* (Charity). Therefore it is clear that the structure of Tamil society was entirely different from that of *Āryan* Society during the pre-Christian era. The *Parppanār* seem to have held high respect and regard among the society. They are those who look after the welfare of the people. They are called *Parppanār*: because they see things in advance by means of their constant study and keen observation of men and matters.

The *Parppanār*, the *ayyar* (scholars) and the *pulavar* (poets) appear to have played a prominent role in shaping the form of the society (90(173) by their precept and practice.

Division of day, Month and year: The day time and night time seem to form and full day which is divided into six parts: i.e., *vaikaṭai* (early morning before sunrise), *vidiyal* (morning), *naṇṇahal* (noon), *eṇṇādu* (the sun set), *mālai* (the first part of the night) and *yāmam* (midnight). Each is to have ten *nāḷikais* or four hours. There are seven days in a week. All the names of the days are still in use as they had been used during the age of Tholkāppiyar.

There are twelve months in a year which is divided into six seasons, each having two months. The seasons are named *iḷevenil*, *muthuvēnil*, *kar*, *kūthir*, *munpani* and *pinpani*. Tholkāppiyar has mentioned the season and the hours which are suitable to the enjoyment of love in its various aspects. In the treatment of love, *mullai* (chastity) plays a prominent role. So when mentioning the season and hours suitable to the *mullai* he points out at first. Therefore some scholars think that the month of *Āvani* the first month

of *kār* season might have been the first month of Tamil year during the age of Tholkāppiyar. The practice of counting months of a year from *Āvani* in Kerala State even today is brought to support this view (6,7,8,9,10(154).

Measures and weights: Various measures and weights are to be found in use. He has formulated rules regarding the sound changes of the names which they undergo when used. (164,165,166,167,168,169,171,239,240,*Eḷuththu*(50-60). From the verse 171, it is to be learnt that the name of the measures and weights had initial letters in the rows of *ka, sa, tha, pa, na, ma, va, a* and *u*. The commentator Naccinārkkiniyar has given the following as their names:

Measures : *Kalam, Cādi, Thūthai, Pānai, nāli, Mandai, Vattil,*
Ahal, Uḷakku.

Weights : *Kalañju, Strakam, Thodi, Palam, Niṟai, Ma, Varai,*
Andhai.

Tholkāppiyar has quoted in his verses the names of measures which are *Pānai, alma, nāli, uri, ulakku, thani* and *padhakku* (169, 239, 240, 319, *Eḷuththu* (50-69) and the measure *ka* (170, *Eḷuththu* (50).

Beliefs and Customs: Belief in observing omens seems to have existed among the Tamils of Tholkāppiyar age. Birds are the object of omens. Their movements and crying are taken as prediction of the good or bad (58, 91, *Poru!* (161).

This is called vertical when observing omens during the march of army for invading a country (58(163). They have believed in doing things on auspicious days even for marching towards the enemy country to invade. There is a tree called *unnam*.

They seem to have believed that this tree would foretell the success or defeat of their king by its appearance of spouting or withering respectively (60(164)). They used to have the performance of *vēla* dance to ward off illness supposed to have fallen on an unmarried lass who is suffering from love-sickness (60(164)). After a successful cattle-raiding, they used to distribute the booty to the astrologers and poets and to drink and dance to their hearts' contents (58(163)). After the war has been declared against an enemy country, the king used to dine with the generals and soldiers, distributing food to them (63(165)).

Honors, Military and Civil: There is the practice of awarding titles and honors to the person who has done meritorious service to the king and the country either in the Military service or in the Civil.

Religion and Philosophers: It is to be remarked that Tholkāppiyar is not a Jain who is not attached to God and that the Tamils of his time appear to be conscious of God always.

Tholkāppiyar has given *Māyon*, *Seyōn*, *Vēndhan*, and *Varuṇan* as presiding deities of forest, mountain, field and sea-side, respectively. These are not the names of different Gods; but names of one God who is called by different names in different places. Though the names appear to be those of personal Gods, really it is not so. The names refer to one impersonal God having four names derived from four characteristics of God; *Māyon* is derived from the nature of immortality, *Seyōn* from unapproachability, *Vēndhan* from that of over lordship and *Vicuṇa* from that of color of showering blessing.

Political life: Political life is the offshoot of the social life. It is found under the previous heading that the Tamils of Tholkāppiyar age were noted for their advanced social life. Their political life also did not lag behind.

Tholkāppiyar has divided life as well as literature into *Aham* and *Puṇam*. *Puṇam* is mainly concerned with the political life which springs from social life and influences it.

Puṇam begins with the war. Among the seven divisions of *Puṇam*, all but the last two deal with war. So we must not come to the conclusion that the ancient Tamils were ever war –mongering and that they were tribal, devoid of all culture. It is true that the course of war is found systematized to such an extent as to appear an art of life. It is methodically arranged into many stages which appear to be followed one after another. Their aims of war are very lofty.

The morals concerning the war can be understood. Regarding the invasion of a country and the fighting, the aims are put fourth in verses 62 and 70 in *Poruḷ* (165) as it is aimed at marching in advance to frighten and conquer the king who is greedy to have the land of others and it is greatness of destroying a king who comes to fight, having the object of exhibiting his might. Therefore the war is said to be fought only for self-defense, but not for aggression. So it is to be concluded that the Tamils of Tholkāppiyar age were passive and defensive, not aggressive in their policy of war.

Tamil Nadu appears to be composed of territory, population, government and sovereignty which form the four essential constituent elements of state. Its boundary seems to be well marked-*Vēṅgaḍam* on the North, *Kumari* on the South and the seas

on the East and West in the introduction by Panamparanār (391 *Sol* (77)). It is divided into twelve administrative units (400 (79)). Tholkāppiyar says that it is ruled by three kings-*Sera*, *Sola*, and *Pāndiyar* – who are very famous because of their benevolence. (391(231)). So it is to be understood that these three kings ruled Tamil Nadu, each his own territory without any dispute and quarrel which seem to be the feature of Tamil Nadu of later centuries.

In the text of Tholkāppiyam, there is no references to any of these kings by name except the one collectively referred in the verse (391(231)). But in the introduction of Panamparanār, it is said Tholkāppiyam has been published in the great assembly of scholars convened by *Nilam tharu thiruvin Pāndiyan*. So the term *muvar* in verse (391(231)) denotes definitely the traditional *Sera*, *Sola* and *Pāndiya* kings. They appear to have patronized poets and scholars, maintained great armies, employed officers, sent ambassadors and enjoyed life on the lines not different from modern times (191(201)).

Hereditary monarchy seems to be the form of Government. The monarch is not despotic and cruel. But he is benevolent and sympathetic. Plato says, “Until Philosophers are kings or the kings and princes of this world have the spirit and power of philosophy, and wisdom and political leadership mean in the same man,..... Cities will never cease from ill or the human race” (Durant 23). What Plato has said has been true of Tamil Nadu. The Tamil kings of Tholkāppiyar’s age seem to be philosophers and scholars and to be guided by philosopher-poets.

The advice rendered by poets is called *Seviyaṟivuṟū* or *Vāyurai Vāḷiththu* and it has found a place in literature (*Poruḷ* 423,473(234).

The king is called either *vēndhu* (57(163) or *vēndhan*(64(166) or *vēndhar* (72) or *arasar* (75(168). The word *vēndhu* or its variation appears to be derived from the root *vēm* which means *vēndol* being loved (344 *Sol* (137). So it is expected that the king must be loved by the people. The word, *arasar* is derived from the root *arasu*. It is not the Tamilised form of the Sanskrit word *Rāja* as it is believed by some scholars.

The difference must be noted. In Sanskrit *Rajyam* (Kingdom) is derived from *Raja* (King). Here, in Tamil *Arasan* (king) is derived from *Arasu* (Kingship). Originally in Tamil Nadu whoever rules the land is entitled to be called *Arasar* (ruler). A particular community has the right by birth to rule-*Kashtriya*-did not exist in Tamil Nadu.

It is said that the king (*arasan*) has five kinds of duties to the people and the state (75 *Poruḷ*(168). *Naccinārkkiniyar* has given the five kinds as the study of books, performing sacrifice, giving, protecting (the people) and punishing (the wicked). *Iḷḷampuranār* has included the distribution of arms in the place of punishing the wicked. The performance of sacrifice is foreign to Tamil culture and it is nowhere mentioned in *Tholkāppiyam*. The study of books and the distribution of arms are not to be considered as the duties which are to be rendered to the people. Therefore it is to be concluded that both *Naccinārkkiniyar* and *Iḷḷampuranār* are not able to give the five kinds of duties of the king correctly. On the basis of *Tholkāppiyam*

(*Puraththinai*), we are able to summarise the five kinds of the duties of king as follows: i. resisting the foreign invasion, ii. maintaining peace and order, iii. patronizing poets and philosophers, iv. punishing the wicked, v. protecting the good.

Of the two kinds of monarchs, absolute and limited, the Tamil Kings appear to be limited monarchs. They were controlled by the poets of their court. Further, there is reference to an assembly which is credited with eight kinds of qualities of description. So it is to be inferred that the assembly of scholars also might have some check upon the king. Therefore the king is neither a tribal chieftain nor a despot. But he seems to be a monarch controlled by an assembly of scholars and poets.

Abdication, renunciation and leaving the capital city are expected from a king sometimes when the occasion arises (76 (169)). This happens when the king goes against the wishes of the people. It proves that the king is not absolute and is thus limited.

Army: Army is indispensable at all times for the existence of state whatever may be the form of government. Thiruvalluvar, the statesman-Philosopher of the Post-Tholkāppiyar age, has emphasized it rightly by giving prominence to it among the six essential constituents of a state. During the age of Tholkāppiyar also it was given due importance and the three kings-*Sera*, *Sola* and *Pāndiyar* – were said to have possessed great armies (60(164)). It was in three divisions which were infantry (*thānnai*), elephantry (*yānai*) and cavalry (*kuthirai*) (74(168)). Though chariot (*thēr*) was used as vehicle in the war (76(169)). It was not formed as a separate division.

Because it was driven by horse, it might have been formed as a sub-division of cavalry. It seems that the army men were wearing the flowers of their respective kings as war badges to be indentured by others (60(164).

Arms: Arms used in the war were sword, spear, bow and arrow (60, 71,72. (165-167).The methods of warfare and the bravery of warriors are fully described in the chapter on *Puram*. The Tamil kings being defensive always won battles on the basis of the established moral code.

War-Camps: The kings and the warriors were forbidden to have their wives with them in the war-camps (175(199). All the citizens were expected to fight for their king and country when occasion arose. So it was enjoined that the separation from wife on behalf of the king was limited to the period of one year (189(201). Serving in the army was termed as king's service and the political life of the people was confined to the king's service only. The Tamil country was considered not a separate entity but a part of the world. So it was called "*Thamil kurunaḷḷuḷakam*" (193(201) the good part of the world where Tamil is spoken. It is to be presumed that they had the idea of one world in which many languages were spoken.

Thus, Tamil Nādu was populated by the indigenous people who were united linguistically, racially, culturally and religiously. There were no problems of minority, backward and forward disputes which are greatly agitating the minds of modern statesmen. There was not to be found any reference to castes in Tholkāppiyam. Gradually the caste system came to settle in Tamil Nadu because of its adoption of North Indian culture and civilization. The saints and scholars denounced the caste-system. Thiruvalluvar, the philosopher and poet of the post-

Tholkāppiyar age, condemned the caste-system by saying: “All are born equal: but honor varies according to their work” (972(168)).

It is clear to know the state of Tamil language and literature and the condition of Tamil Nadu during the pre-Christian era by means of Tholkāppiyam. It seems that Tholkāppiyam is a mile-stone in the history of Tamil Nadu in all respects. Tholkāppiyar appears to be not only a grammarian but also a poet, linguist, philosopher, historian and sociologist. As Panamparanār points out he is a great scholar in Tamil and Sanskrit. Tholkāppiyam testifies to his scholarship.

Tholkāppiyar has not allowed his scholarship of Sanskrit to mar the beauty and originality of Tamil. Panamparanār has rightly said that he (Tholkāppiyar) has written his monumental work on the basis of the Tamil books available in his time between *Venkadam* on the north and *Kumari* on the south. With these references, we are able to know the conditions of the Tamil language and literature prevailed before the time of Tholkāppiyar. So, Tholkāppiyam is to be considered not only as a book of descriptive study but a study of understanding the ways of life of people.

In ‘*Porul*’, it is concerned with the science of literature which is based upon the life of the people. The life of the Tamil people of later centuries appear to be changed in most respects from that of the people of Tholkāppiyar age. So the literature of later centuries which is based upon the life of the people is not in conformity with the rules of Tholkāppiyam.

The study of Tholkāppiyam in the light of what we learn from the linguistic works and criticisms of literature of modern age will be beneficial to our language and literature. It is possible for us to assess the greatness of Tholkāppiyam and its

author, Tholkāppiyar. What Plato and Aristotle are to Greece and the West, Tholkāppiyar is to Tamil Nadu and the East. Now focusing our concept of comparing Tholkāppiyar with an eminent personality in the realm of American Literature is Thomas Stearns Eliot, born British and brought up as American. Eliot may best be called a literary champion, was born on September 26, 1888 St. Louis, Missouri, a large industrial city. His parents exerted a strong influence on him. His grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot was a highly respectable man of his own community. He led a life of “pure, unfaltering endeavour” (“Notes towards the Definition of Culture”122).T.S. Eliot referred to the general outlook of his own family, and disclosed that the standard of conduct for the members had been get by his grandfather. “Our decisions between duty and self-indulgence” (123) he commented, “were taken as if, like Moses, he had brought down the tables of the law” (Ward, Anne 4-5). To state it precisely, any deviation from the moral principles was regarded as sinful. Eliot’s literary interests are assumed and it was stimulated by his mother Charlotte C. Eliot, a distinguished poetess. Her best work ‘Saronarba’ was published in 1926 in London. Eliot wrote an introduction to the volume and sent her cuttings of the reviews that appeared in different magazines and newspapers. And it is highly impossible to separate his work as a poet or a playwright or a critic. He has formulated his own theories on his poetry, drama and criticism is highly noteworthy.

Eliot has coined a number of memorable phrases which strike deep into everything. In order to understand Eliot’s stress on permeable presence of his artistic impersonality, it is essential to examine some of his critical concepts.

Objective Correlative: The phrase ‘Objective Correlative’ was first used by Eliot in his essay on Hamlet. In the opinion of T.S Eliot in *Selected Prose* emotion can be expressed in poetry through the use of some suitable “Objective-Correlative”. Eliot himself defines ‘Objective Correlative’ as “a set of objects a situation, a chain of events, which shall be the formula for the poet’s emotion’ so that, “when the external parts are given the emotion is at once evoked” (*Selected Essays* 102). Instead of communicating the emotions directly to the reader, the playwright has embodied them in a situation or chain of events, which suitably communicate the emotions to the reader. The ‘Objective Correlative’ is a way of conveying emotion without direct verbal expression by presenting certain situations and events which arouse a similar emotion in the readers. Eliot has been an exponent of objectivity and we can see that the artist has to lose his personality to be able to arrive at the ‘Objective Correlative’. The union of the subject (the event in the work of art) and the object of the ‘Objective-Correlative’ lead to the birth of the work of art and the liberation of the artist. When the artist surrenders his personality fully to the object of his contemplation he is a full man. Otherwise he suffers from a fragmented personality which Eliot calls ‘Dissociation of Sensibility’. For Eliot ‘Unification of Sensibility’ means fusion of thought and feeling (109). He explains how this fusion of thought and feeling takes place.

Tennyson and Browning are poets; and they think, but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it identified his sensibility. When a poet’s mind is perfectly equipped for its work, it is constantly amalgamating disparate

experiences, the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, and fragmentary. The latter falls in love, reads Spinoza, and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes.(110-112)

Unification of Sensibility: 'Unification of Sensibility' has another aspect, which is the harmonious working of the creative and critical faculties of a poet. The poet creates in a moment of inspiration and corrects at leisure. The poet must create, but he must also bring the critical faculty to work upon what he has created. He must revise and polish, and thus get a creation into shape. A great writer must necessarily be a great critic as well, for he must constantly analyse, reject, and select.

According to Eliot, a poet must learn and practise self-control. He must revise and re-revise what he writes. Mature art is possible only by this way. Eliot valued classical art for its clarity and formal perfection. While pointing to such activities he was opposed to romantic subjectivity. It was the uncontrolled expression of emotion which led the romantics into variants of all sorts. Eliot felt that emotion in poetry must be depersonalized. Artistic self-effacement is essential for great art. In this regard, Eliot's classical bias appears both in his critical and poetical works.

Eliot has a strong opinion that a work of art must be judged with reference to some principles. A critic must determine if a particular poet has succeeded in depersonalizing his emotions and whether his poetry shows a fusion of thought and feeling or not. Thus, 'Objective-Correlative', 'Unification of Sensibility' and adherence to 'tradition' are the touchstones to measure the greatness of a work of art.

Eliot has his own theories of poetry and the poetic process and they are developed in essays like 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', 'The Function of Criticism' and so on. Eliot's critical essay, 'The Tradition and the Individual' may be regarded as the unofficial manifesto of Eliot's critical creed. His principles are the basis of all his subsequent criticism. Eliot begins by pointing out that the word of 'tradition' is generally regarded as a term of censure. A work of art is praised for those aspects of one's work which are 'individual' and 'original'. The best and the most individual part of a poet's work is that which shows the maximum influence of the writers of the past. To quote Eliot's own words:

Whereas if we approach a poet without this prejudice, we shall find that not only the best, but the most individual parts of his work may be those in which the dead poets, his ancestors, assert their immortality most vigorously. (22)

For, Eliot tradition does not mean a blind adherence to the ways of the previous generation or generations. For Eliot, tradition is a matter of much wider significance. Tradition, in the true sense of the term, cannot be inherited; it can be obtained only by hard labour. This hard labour is of knowing the writers of the past. It is the critical labour of shifting the good from the bad, and of knowing what is good and useful. This tradition can be obtained only by those who have the historical sense. This sense involves a perception. "One who has the historic sense feels that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer down to his own day, including the literature of his own country, forms one continuous literary tradition." (23). Eliot realizes that the past exists in the present and that the past and the present form one

simultaneous order. Eliot valued this historic sense which makes a writer traditional. Eliot says that the sense of tradition is a recognition of the continuity of literature, a critical judgment as to which of the writers of the past continue to be significant in the present and a knowledge of these is significant in the writers obtained through painstaking effort. Eliot talks of tradition as the accumulated wisdom and experience of ages and feels that its knowledge is essential for really great and noble achievements. Thus the artistic process involves the conscious submission of the poet's personality to the past so that what is born as a consequence bears no trace of the man.

Dynamic Concept of Tradition: Emphasizing the value of tradition, Eliot points out that no writer has his value and significance in violation of tradition. To judge the work of a poet, we must compare and contrast his work with the work of poets in the past. Such comparison and contrast is essential for forming an idea about the real work and significance of a new writer and his work. Eliot's conception of tradition is a dynamic one. According to him, tradition is not anything fixed and static; it is constantly changing, growing and becoming different from what it is. A writer in the present seeks guidance from the past; he must conform to the literary tradition. The past directs and guides the present, so the present alters and modifies the past (23). When a new work of art is created, if it is really new and original, the whole literary tradition is modified, if even slightly. The relationship between the past and present is not one-sided; it is a reciprocal relationship. The past directs the present, and is itself modified and altered by the present. Eliot himself states that "the existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the

introduction of the new work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervening of novelty, the whole existing order must be, if ever so slightly altered”(23) it is egotism of wanting to create a new order. It is realized that the existing perfectness in order is true spiritual humility. Submitting to perfection is the way to liberation. Thus the artist, by being egoless, liberates himself.

Eliot explains what he means by a sense of tradition. According to him it does not mean that the poet should try to know the past as a whole, taking it in mass without much discrimination. Such a course is impossible as well as undesirable. Eliot adds that the past must be examined critically and the significant in it should be acquired. Further, the sense of tradition does not also mean that the poet should know only a few poets whom he admires. That would be a sign of immaturity and inexperience.

A poet should not be content merely with some particular age or period which he likes. This may be pleasant and delightful, but it will not constitute a sense of tradition. A sense of tradition in the real sense means, consciousness, “of the main current, which does not flow invariably through the most distinguished reputations” (24). The poet must judge critically the main trends. Further Eliot states that one must continue oneself to the main trends to the exclusion of all that is incidental. The poet must possess the critical gift in ample measure, and also must realize that the main literary trends are not determined by the great poets alone. Even smaller poets should not be ignored. Eliot states that the poet must also realize that art that never improves,

through its material are never the same. The great work of art never loses their significance, for there is no qualitative improvement in art.

Thus, Eliot is conscious of the Criticism that will be made of his theory of tradition. His view of tradition requires a ridiculous amount of erudition. It is understood that there have been great poets who were not learned and further that made too much of learning kills sensibility. However, Eliot clearly states that knowledge does not merely mean bookish knowledge and the capacity for acquiring knowledge differs from person to person. Some can absorb knowledge easily, while others must sweat for it. It is said to be a duty of every poet to acquire, to the best of his ability, this knowledge of the past, and he must continue to acquire this consciousness throughout his career. Such awareness of tradition sharpens poetic creation. After all self-mastery is not gained overnight, in a trice. Having surrendered, the poet has to labor through his life until total annihilation of self takes place followed by total assimilation of tradition.

Impersonality in Poetry: Eliot points out how the poetic creation is jaded in normal order and how it should be. Eliot stresses that the artist should continuously surrender himself to something which is more valuable than himself that is literary tradition. The artist must allow his poetic sensibility to be shaped and modified by the past and continue to acquire the sense of tradition throughout his career. Undergoing this process, his individuality, may assert itself, but as his powers mature there must be greater and greater extinction of personality. The artist must acquire greater and greater objectivity. His emotions and passions must be depersonalized. For Eliot the personality of the artist is not important, as his sense of 'tradition' is the more

important one. The artist should forget his personal joys and sorrows, and be absorbed in acquiring a sense of tradition and express it in a work of art. Thus the poet's personality is merely a medium, having the same significance as a catalytic agent in a chemical reaction. Then the mind of the poet is necessary, for combinations of emotions and experiences to take place, but it does not itself undergo any change during the process of poetic combination. The mind of the poet is constantly forming emotions and experience into new wholes, but the new combination does not contain even a trace of the poet's mind. It is in the utterly egoless consciousness of the artist that the greatest art takes shape. According to Eliot, there are two kinds which enter into poetic process, emotions and feelings. He distinguishes the two but never differentiates them. Eliot emphasizes depersonalizing emotions. He stresses that there should be an extinction of personality. This impersonality can be achieved only when the poet surrenders himself completely to the work. He adds that a poet can know what is to be done only of the present, but also of the past 'not only what is dead, but of what is already living' (30). And Eliot concludes saying, "poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality" (29).

In this way, the study of Eliot seems to either begin or end with his own work. His personality is a rare composite product of multiple and diverse influences. In order to understand him, we are supposed to analyse all those influences which has influenced upon him. He displays his ideas for discovering "the true meaning or meaninglessness" (Lucy 142) hidden under the exterior aspect of things. 'Being a

poet of “the need for significance” (142) Eliot is always grappling with the problems of spiritual recovery and regeneration.

Of many influences that are easily identifiable in Eliot’s career as poet, critic and playwright, the influence of the symbolists is the most outstanding. Eliot was attracted by the suggestiveness, idiom and technique of the French symbolists. Their imagery was new and the structure of their poetry was complex and unregulated. It was this category that infused a new hope in Eliot’s mind. From this, a new technique emerged to suite to his genius.

Eliot was a product of Harvard, Paris and Oxford. He was a traditionalist. Theologically, he was a catholic, who was also influenced by the philosophies of Zoroaster and Buddha. Philologically, Eliot belonged to the class of Dante, Bradley and Shakespeare. Philosophically, F.H. Bradley, Middleton Murry and F.H. Bradley exercise a considerable influence on his mind. Josiah Royce, a monist and Post-Kantian idealist, held the whole universe to be a part of an all comprehensive mind- the Logos’ or the ‘Absolute’ (Sharma 103). According to him, loyalty was the greatest virtue for the complete life of reality. Order and surrender were the supreme virtues for the individual to work out his salvation. And this appears to be a result of an influence over Eliot’s emphasis on order in life, religion and literature. Eliot imparted the lessons of classical spirit and European culture which ultimately threw him into a new cultural renaissance. Eliot had an earnest desire for the creation of a new drama. All these exhibit Eliot’s realization of the need for disciplining emotions in art.

Eliot has another significant aspect of literary personality. He had a deep understanding of the primitive cultural forms which provides an anthropological dimension to his critical and creative activity. His love for the music hall, the modern baler, and the Johnsonian comedy lends credibility to this view (14). In *The Egoist*, T.S.Eliot is more primitive, as well as more civilized, than his contemporaries. His experience is 'deeper than civilization' (15). He maintains that the study of the primitive man and his modes of enjoyment, including poetry, can help our understanding of civilized art and poetry. In this way, the primitive arts have the power to enlarge the sphere of contemporary activities. Hence, T.S.Eliot expressed the view that for the creation of the new drama the music hall comedian was, perhaps, the best material. (SW 70). Eliot choose to commit himself a major dramatist only late in his career. In Matthiessen's view, the essentially dramatic nature of Eliot's poetry displayed itself through its power to communicate "a sense of real life, a sense of a movement as it is actually felt"(67) This element demands from the poet "a unified sensibility, a capacity of feeling that can clearly interweave emotion and thought (110). It is clearly stated that it requires from him a mature realization of the existence of both "good and evil", leading to an understanding that life assumes a dramatic significance, only when perceived as a struggle between these forces. These explanations reveal the dramatic elements in Eliot's early poetry; they do not lead to the proper genesis of his option for the drama. To arrive at a correct analysis of Eliot's metamorphosis into a poetic dramatist, his basic attitude towards life and literature has to be formulated. Besides a socio-religious awareness also remains in

Eliot's work, a condition precedent to his creative efforts. The essential point is to correlate his world-view with these notions on art and literature.

Taking together all these observations and comments, interspersed as they are in prose writings, furnish valuable clues to the understanding of his world-view. Within the premise of Eliot's world-view, it is easy to locate the exact nature of his interest in the drama. Eliot's creative art is suffused with the dramatic element. This can be explained in terms of his world-view where man is presented as a synthesis of opposite and reconcilable, which when expressed through the medium of art and literature is bound to assume the form of the drama. The temptation of Thomas Becket in Murder in the Cathedral, the choice of Harry for a missionary life in The Family Reunion and the irresolution of Celia for a martyr's fate in The Cocktail Party are only the dramatic projections of an inner struggle which is precipitated by the forces of good and evil inherent in the nature of man.

As a literary artist, Eliot's dramatic ideals and his world-view are easily established by his own progress. It means that Eliot's plays do not represent a mere coincidence with the period of his expanding social and religious horizons. Eliot stresses the importance of tradition in "art and literature" (SW 47) He formulated what is generally known as the concept of 'autonomy' in poetry (54). In The Scared Wood, he conceived the existence of a whole 'literary order' (50) but in After Strange Gods he began to take interest in the "problems of social order"(20). In conclusion, what was originally an artistic formulation gradually became a means of religious communication. Eliot paved the way to a new dimension to the problem of literary

value, when he asserted the greatness of literature could not be determined “solely by literary standards” (SE 388) Eliot modified his views on literary order. According to Eliot, “literary order” is the first requisite to the making of great literature. Eliot’s acceptance of the Anglo-Catholic faith begins to signify the need for a social order and the way to establish it. Committed to a specific world-view, Eliot decided to write the drama which is the most effective medium of social and religious transformation.

In his lecture on ‘Religious Drama’, Eliot states that the religious and the dramatic elements in everyman are ‘not merely combined but wholly fused’. These observations tend to show a method as to how faith and art can be brought together in the dramatic pattern. Eliot accepts the relevance of religion to all spheres of artistic activity and the drama is no exception to this. According to Eliot, the religious and the artistic elements are equally important. And Religion is necessary, since it alone can impart that “wholeness of outlook” which is an essential feature of a genuine play” (Jones 48). Thus Eliot’s theological interests brought him to the sphere of drama. According to him, religion conditions his world-view. His whole work, creative as well as critical, bears testimony to this tendency and focused on religion which has largely determined the theme and treatment of his plays.

Christianity is presented as a vision in certain ways of seeing and feeling things. Thus, Eliot’s plays are Christian in more than one sense. Yet the playwright presents religion as a matter not of mere sentiment, but of emotional response. It is precisely stated that the most remarkable feature of these plays is the manner in which Eliot has applied religious touch-stones to reveal the inner mysteries of the divine

reality. These revelations which occur in Eliot would be the influence of his study of Vedanta Upanishads and Buddhist philosophy.

Eliot has no positive concept of the drama as a form of art. It can be analysed by the standard of the work of art. According to Eliot, it is the artist's manipulation of form that provided him a way of giving "order and meaning" to his personal experience ('London Letter' 480). Hence, Eliot concludes that the chief concern of the artist is to transmute his personal agonies into something rich and strange, something impersonal and universal". (SE 135)

Like Tholkāppiyar, Eliot believes in the nature of an aesthetic structure of a literary work. He asserts that instead of presenting form and content the artist should fuse them into a new pattern of reality. The genre attracts Eliot and it can give a suitable structure to obtain an ideal relationship of the parts to their whole. As a matter of fact, the term "dramatic" means to Eliot more than a mere "presentation of action"(46) It implies a virtual transformation of an ordered whole, a total reality, where everything is perfectly designed into a unified pattern.

Eventually, Eliot feels that the drama, by virtue of its ritualistic origin, is the most appropriate vehicle for expressing man's primordial experience. While the other literary forms project the various elements only in part, the drama alone has the power to present them in a whole order, since it can embody the panorama of whole worlds, effectively and completely. Besides, this form possesses the capacity to convey the sense of the primacy of the supernatural order over the natural world.

To all intents, Eliot's approach as a dramatist may be called idealistic. His interest in the drama is not merely technical in the same way as his pursuit of

order is not literary. In fact, whatever Eliot proposes to achieve in life or in literature cannot be separated from his interest in the drama. The genre of the drama appeals to Eliot since it deals with human actions which may not be significant in them and yet may assume significance the moment they refer to all the literary forms. The drama is the most articulate. Eliot evolves a dramatic structure suited to his religious needs. Besides, Eliot constructs his dramatic themes conveying the presence of the supernatural order in the natural world. Hence, each play is religious in its own right and thus Eliot attempts to convey through his plays a sense of the divine purpose governing the whole universe.

Eliot asserts the validity of religion in ordinary life and reasserts its value by the way of offering religious solutions to the problems of the individual. Hence Murder in the Cathedral portrays, in the sacrifice of a saint, a means of salvation not only for Becket but also for the ordinary women of Canterbury. The Family Reunion depicts, in the self-control of Harry, a way of expiation to the other members of his family. The Cocktail Party presents, in Reilly's treatment of Edward and Lavinia, a method of spiritual renewal, not only for the individual but also for a group of people. The Confidential Clerk implies the theme of foundling child to express the Christian implications of 'the search for identity' by insisting that discovering one's self to be a child of the heavenly Father. 'The loss of identity' is developed in the problems of identity experienced by Celia and the Chamberlaynes in The Cocktail Party. The complete means of salvation in The Elder statesman is only the means of salvation presented is through the recognition of human love as an earthly image of the divine love of God. At his best Eliot presents some realization of a definite whole

in life and dramas create an ideal world to establish the primacy of the supernatural order over the natural world.

Eliot has made valid products of his religious awareness. The plays generally depict the dilemma of man who perceives the order of God but made to face the hard realities of life, finds it difficult to sustain this perception. Concerning Eliot's achievement, it is a creation of a dramatic structure, wherein the emphasis is not so much on the human behaviour as on the divine order it implies.

Both, Eliot and Tholkāppiyar go in the line of an artist and a spiritualist. To them, art is not an end in itself. It is a channel through which the artist attains perception of soul and the peace that leads to understanding. Hence the artistic mission is one of external self-martyrdom. The artist takes up his cross every minute of his life and their critical concepts are only a formulation of this principle of surrender. The surrender of the ego, according to Eliot, is the *sine qua non* for artistic creation. Thus artistic creation and liberation are synonymous for Eliot and Tholkappiyar. Their characters live in the world peacefully without having any aggressive design. They lived the life of honour and fame aiming always at the object of achieving great things. (*Porul* 93(193) What is there to achieve great in the civilized humanity is the introspective view into the affair which leads to the search for identity, and that consequently happens to be the search for truth.

Chapter II

The Evaluatory Criticism And Making Of Literature

CHAPTER II

THE EVALUATORY CRITICISM AND MAKING OF LITERATURE

Criticism and Truth:

Truth is the ultimate end of all human endeavours. The histories of arts and science tell us that this search for truth has been vigorous and continuous down the ages and that it has been going on since the emergence of the discrete Homo Sapiens. There have been countless observations made in laboratories and observatories and more and more artistic compositions worked out in order to reach at truth. Yet it has been elusive to human spirit. What was thought as truth yesterday is found to be untruth today forcing humanity to go on with its search for truth.

Truth is such an object of pursuit because it is the most essential factor for human survival. It is its ultimate hope. Falsehood or ignorance or untruth destines mankind to insecurity and therefore pursuit of truth has become peremptory for human survival. The various departments of human affairs are founded on this secure truth. Wherever there is untruth, there is threat of life; threat to development. The intuitive survival instinct in man urges him to grab at truth so that he may live. Thus truth for man is life. The idea of salvation also insists upon this. This aspect of the ontological philosophy of truth can be explained in a simple way. That is seeing truth in its actual mode of existence in relation to the various levels of human existence.

On the physical side, science discovers material truth. This discovery is not whole but in part, that is why we have innovations and modifications from time to

time. Such discoveries of the physical science are attempts of man to make him more and more physically secure from the material force of nature.

There are two other dangers also for man; the intellectual ignorance of Truth, viz., intellectual untruth and the spiritual ignorance of Truth, and spiritual untruth. Arts like architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry and philosophy, pursue Truth intellectually and aesthetically. The findings and attainments in these fields are not whole but in part; that is why we have ever so many corrections and improvements from time to time by artists and intellectuals of various kinds. They have all attempted to make man intellectually secure.

On the spiritual side, we have in every period ages and saints contemplating truth. Such endeavours are to make man spiritually secure. Hence, these three vital aspects of truth becomes the human kind contemplates for its survival.

Now, it becomes inevitable to find out the nearness of truth and literature. We can say the creation of literature is a part of the intellectual human endeavour to find truth. It is also a search for aesthetic truth and the truth of a higher order of things. It is a serious attempt to make humanity remain secure in the existing order of affairs, create and perpetuate a vital and valid order of values. From this, we can assert that this search for truth, and in consequence, attempting up a higher order of value systems becomes the primary purpose of literature.

This illustrates the point that truth lies secure in the care of literature. Having understood, we immediately turn to the question of effective creation of art. Now, it must be said that the efficiency of literature in championing the cause of truth depends on how effectively it is created. In other words, it ought not to have deviated

from the right course of effective creation. It must be free from all kinds of extravagances and vanities that might distract us from seeing the truth. It means that it must be free from prejudice and untruthful influences so that it produces the right effect in the mind of the reader. Now the right effect, of course, is of the highest order. However, it is not easy considering our human limitations to be free from shortcomings in creating literature. Therefore it ought to be agreed that and certain norms are inevitable to hold literature setting forth to guard literature with such interests as its highest obligation.

What criticism is?

Coombes defines literary criticism is “a disciplined relevance in response, comment and determination of significance” (9). Leavis’ comment on literary criticism is great use to us in this context when we try to know what criticism in general means. It is simple and clear to the point and brief enough. In a broader sense it is a search for truth and in a limited way in its response. The critical activity we may say is a byproduct of any response. This activity is but natural. In other words it is the natural activity of any intellectual being. Here and how we must clear a misunderstanding the moment we think of a critical activity. Criticism is an orthodox sense we understood as “fault-finding” (Irmischer 300). More positively looking at it with Irmischer “it does not mean it propose to find fault with things, what it means is that we want to ask questions, try to understand and come to conclusions about things we like or do not like”(300). In brief as said earlier we ‘respond’. “We respond either consciously or sub consciously every time we hear a speech see a film or listen to a concert (300)”. Therefore we may assert that a physical expression

of such abstract. Such a response can be called criticism. Hereby physical expression, we mean the expression in concrete terms.

We may further say that it cannot be a mere expression of response in concrete terms. It may prove disastrous if it is taken in the literal sense. Therefore, a qualifier is preemptory which Eliot supplies. According to him, "criticism must always profess an end in view which... appears to be elucidation of work of art and the correction of taste" (Lodge 48). The "end in view" Truth as it cannot be otherwise since the Truth is mankind's archetypal pursuit, which cannot be obtained through any means other than a perpetual "correction of taste" to which "elucidation" become a means.

Literary criticism

We respond when we hear a speech, watching a film or listening to a concert and while reading. When this response is produced in relation to literature it becomes literary criticism. A clear idea of literary criticism is essential in order to comprehend fully what evaluatory criticism means and how it becomes relevant to our study. It finds certain systems of approach in raising to a literary question. When we look at criticism in this way, we are confronted with D.H Lawrence's approach to literary criticism as a science, which appears in the opening paragraph of his essay on John Galsworthy. "Literary criticism can be no more than a reasoned account of the feeling produced upon the critic by the book he criticizes. Criticism can never be a science. It is in the first place, much too personal and in the second, it is concerned with values which science ignores. The touchstone is emotion not reason. We judge a work by its effect on our sincere and vital emotions and nothing else. All the critical twiddle twaddle about style and form, all this pseudo scientific classifying and analyzing of

books in limitation botanical fashion is mere impertinence and usually dull jargon”(121).

Lawrence’s view on criticism has an “anti-academic temper” (121) and is sentimental and impressionistic. Criticism is no more a product of emotion as Lawrence believes. It has in fact, objectively speaking not much to do with emotion. It has emerged into an intellectual system of thought and it is generally approved by all right thinking persons that no truth is arrived at without an objective system of exploration. Thus it has to be a science. Mere emotional reactions to a work of art denigrate criticism taking it to be a subjective level of love-hate complexities that, in consequence, cloud truth. Emotion is valuable in the sense it helps to develop an aesthetic relationship with the work of art. It is never primary. Going back to Leavis’ observation on criticism that it is “a disciplined relevance in response, comment and determination of significance” (Leavis 95). We will try to answer the latter part of Lawrence’s ridicule.

We say that criticism could not be a science. We may add wherever there is the idea of discipline as asserted by Leavis, there are an order, system and method. And the presence of these three makes a study scientific. In the critical activity, there is an identification which means distinguishing which is not possible without a stock jargon of convenience. Therefore Lawrence’s disgust at “dull jargon” in criticism is not justified. What would have happened to the world of ideas if there were no distinguishing terrors to identify every individual thing? Obviously it would be an unintelligible bolus of chaos. So would criticism end up if it were not to have a specialist’s jargon of identification?

In a world of confusion we must pit our protest against any kind of sanction towards subjectivity and leaving decision-making to individuals. In dealing with literature we must be all the more cautious that individuals do not become law makers. In a liberal world where ideas and philosophies are everyone's individual right what we need is more and more order and discipline and unstinting systems of values and judgement. It alone implies the fate of the world that depends upon the type of evaluation we make. It is true to literature also. So as to establish the excellence in literature we must have an aid and that aid, obviously is the evaluatory system of criticism.

The evaluatory system of criticism :

Before we actually come to the evaluatory system of criticism, we are forced to redeem the overlapping implications of 'valuation' and 'evaluation.' The distinction is very essential to have a perfect understanding of evaluation to make out our study effective and easy. To begin with, we shall try to understand the distinction by Austin Warren's recommendation that "men ought to value literature for being what it is they ought to evaluate it in terms of its literary value" (Wellek and Warren 142).

Valuing literature is appreciating it for what it is worth. Mankind has 'valued' literature either oral or printed, i.e., it has taken interest in it and has assigned positive worth to it through history. People value literature when it corresponds and coheres with their culture cluster of song, dance and religious ritual in which it seems to originate. Another implication of valuing literature is attachment to literature. Attachment simply means valuing literature in relation to its component parts (238).

There is a discussion of valuation and evaluation in some detail by Warren in his chapter, 'Evaluation'. He registers the various labeling of literature in an answer to "what as a matter of fact, have men valued literature for? What kinds of value or worth or interest they found in it" (238). The more ancient valuation is that of Horace. The value he attached to literature was "dulce et utile" which might be translated as "entertainment" and "edification" or "play" and "work" or "terminal value" and "instrumental value" or "art" and "propaganda" or as Warren puts it, it may be understood as "art an end in itself and art as communal ritual and culture blunder" (238).

Coming to evaluation we may make the following elucidations. To say a literary work only, "I like it" or "I don't like it" is not actually an evaluation, it is a dismissal. Personal response is an important beginning, but in some way it must be pushed further to say what the worth of a literary work is or what is lacking that would make it valuable. Evaluations therefore extend over a range of possibilities from formal considerations to private ones (Irmscher 392). Here Irmscher has put it in a nutshell what evaluation generally means. Though much abused the evaluatory system of criticism is very real and very useful to distinguish the good from the bad the excellent from the mediocre. It is, no doubt, a valid approach to criticism. "Study of Criticism and Valuation of Literature," makes the following observation, "... every reader should regard it part of his duty to encourage what is good and discourage what is bad..." (Hudson 309) and he further cautions us to be discriminative since "literature is enormous in quantity and of varying degrees of excellence" that "it is of fundamental importance that we should read the new works of new days" with a

constant sense of relative values and a desire always to discriminate so far as possible between what is genuine and what is fictitious”(312). Thus Hudson tells us that discrimination is reading with a constant sense of relative values. Without the sense of relative values we are prone to err giving too much credit to our own wisdom and ability to judge. The question of relative values necessitates the speculation of normative to evaluation of which we will see in the latter part of his chapter. Before we come to certain standard evaluations of literature we will do well to see common kinds of evaluations as they are essential to justify the usefulness of this criticism later by way of contrast.

In the first place, a work may be considered in terms of itself. It is in other words evaluating with a view to total effect produced. It contemplated what a work of art should do, namely, “that all of its part should be working towards the total effect” (Irmscher 392). Such a kind of evaluation analyses how each part relates to the whole and how the parts relate to each other. In this process, the epistemological mode of existence or the “Ontological Situs” of the literary work of art and the reason of the principles of arrangement are questioned.

In such considerations we must caution, as said early not to slip into personal whims and affinities. “Arnold’s touchstone method can be easily discredited as too infinitive, too limited or too backward looking”(392). To Hudson, this method was “rather fantastic and unconvincing” (Hudson 15). Yet we to approve of what Irmscher or Hudson says do not seem to set our thinking on “what criteria we are using when we are moved to praise a work of art” (Irmscher 392). What is common with most of the evaluators as complained above is as they have no outside criteria. “Their decision

about worth depends on themselves alone”(392). Such evaluations depending wholly upon one’s personal engagement with a work it purely private kind of criticism and is of little value. It must be added here for our considerations that much of the critical bulk of the past has gone down in esteem because of such private considerations. This is what we are known as use of misuse of a work of art. As Warren quotes “As some to church repair / not for the doctrine but the music there” (392), one may miss the vital part in a work of art. Bearing all these in mind we may briefly understand it in the way Irmischer does that “evaluation is simply a way of considering the merits and limitations in a work in separate terms”(392). There are so many separate terms according to the evaluator’s idea of evaluation. When we focus our attention on the usefulness of evaluatory criticism in a study such as this one, we must try to gather all kinds of views expressed by the evaluators of the past so that we may be fully justified in agreeing or disagreeing with them when we pass our own verdict.

In evaluating literature, older advocates clamour for “pure literature” and condemn “didactic heresy” some evaluate it as “aesthetic experience” which Warren would say, “is a loving attention to qualities and quantitative structures”. Some see it as “aesthetic value” or “an intermediate between “knowledge” and “action” (Wellek 239-240). Accepting it as a fine art Kant stresses in his Critique of Judgement “the purposiveness without purpose” (241). T.S Eliot in his evaluation calls it an “Objective Correlative” and suggests to evaluate the literariness of literature by aesthetic criteria and the greatness of literature by extra aesthetic criteria”(241). Yet another look in for imaginative integration and evaluate its worth by the amount

(and adversity) of material integrated. Formalistic criticism attaches value to a work of art by the degree of tightness of organization (243).

Diversity of materials is another qualifier for the greater value of literature. Bosanquet's (Three Lectures on Aesthetic) distinctions of 'easy beauty' from 'difficult beauty' with its 'intricacy' 'tension' and 'width' also are evaluations of a different character. "We might express the distinctions as between a beauty achieved out of tractable materials (euphony, pleasing visual images, the poetic subject) and beauty wrested from materials which as materials are recalcitrant the painful the ugly the didactic the practical"(243-244).

Many evaluations on literature are of personal insights into a work of art. It is coloured by individual love and hate, influenced by the background and composition of the evaluating personality. Therefore an irrational undisputed subscription to such whims would be disastrous to the well being of the world of letters. Milton's theology in Paradise Lost is unpalatable to an unorthodox Protestant, and therefore the work according to him, is an inferior kind. But it is true not all poems are the same kind. A distinction between superior and inferior is possible. "Each new poet contributes to the stream of poetic tradition. All contributions of course are not equally valuable"(246).

Before the nineteenth century, evaluations centered "upon the rank and hierarchy of the authors" with the firm belief that "that classics who always have been and always will be admired"(246). Such a belief we know has become obsolete with the new awareness of earlier classics that existed in earlier times as the Medieval, the Celtic, the Norse the Hindu and the Chinese (246).

The history of human thought might tell us that there has been no obsolete opinion that is not revised in the passage of time. All critical opinions change as a man tries to continue to be conscious of his inadequacies and complexities of life and the extensiveness of vision of Truth. No subject under the sun has been exhaustively discussed and no eternal conclusions reached. As we stated earlier, what was hailed as truth and magnificent discovery of yesterday is an obsolete today. The various recommendations by different critical approaches prove their own inadequacy as the truth of art. It seems to elude absolute human comprehension as it is as complex and mysterious as life itself. No one has told us, this is truth and it lives thus.

All human thoughts have been revised, all human conclusions doubted.

From the various kinds of evaluations and the non-final inconclusive nature we learn that we have to decide upon some standard that will be self-evident and irrefutable in assessing a work of art as great or not. And Eliot's idea of the function of criticism viz. "elucidation of works of art and the correction of taste" also simply means a need for a standard. We also understand that the evaluatory system of criticism though inadequate in itself, is by far the best we have to assess the worth of literature. But truly on what depends the evaluatory system is the pressing question we have to finally answer. This question takes us to searching out the final standard. Any work of art requires having some standard in general, and the artists possess science of literature consciously or unconsciously for making of literature.

In this perspective, Tholkappiyar has discussed the poetical use of words as Eliot involved in poetic drama as his medium and the occasion for such uses in the

chapter called *Porul*. It means that which is important into the making of literature and emphasis the fact that it is a Science of Literature.

If language is intended for expressing our thoughts, the literature is meant for the experience of life. Abercrombie says: "Literature exists not only in expressing a thing; it equally exists in the receiving of a thing expressed" (Abercrombie 23). So literature must express anything in such a manner as to enable others to understand clearly what is intended and expressed but the author in the literature. It is the duty of the poet or the writer to have this object in his mind while he creates literature. While doing so, the words were made to express the meanings other than those which are found in the dictionary. The function of the words in the poems is not only to emotions, sensuous impressions and psychological intuitions. "A very large part of literary skill consists in vividly liberating for its effect on imagination on just that particular secondary meaning in words which is not only appropriate to the immediate occasion, but which will make the occasion come to life the readers mind"(41).

In poetical language, Tholkāppiyar points out, the imagination reigns supreme. All the objects of neuter gender are endowed with the power of speech and act, thought and emotion. They seem to excel in all activities of human being. They are elevated to the place of high intellectuals.

A love addresses his heart, "Oh my heart! Toughest gone in search of the lovely little lass, endowed with sweet words, bright forehead and chastity intermixed with modesty". "Has it enjoyed her embrace made with her hands adorned with bangles? It having gone with folded hands, shutting her eyes and standing behind her touching her plait of hair which looks like the trunk of she-elephant" (*Aham* 41(158).

In this poem, a heart is addressed as though it has hands and legs and power of enjoyment. Such mode of addressing is restricted to only the lady friend, the foster-mother; the mother and male friend. The lady-love must be portrayed in her capacity of possessing life, modesty and feigned ignorance (*Poruḷ* 201(204)).

The feigned ignorance is called *madan* in Tamil, *Madan* is taken to have denoted actual ignorance in the later centuries. Tholkāppiyar says that “self-restraint, chastity, uprightness, impartiality, knowledge and dearness are characteristics of the female” (*Poruḷ* 209(205)). The heroine must be portrayed in the possession of these qualities and not otherwise.

The divulgence of the secret love to the parent is called “*Aṟaththodu niṟṟaḷ*” which means “the standing by moral code”. This is a theme which would reveal the firmness of the lady-love in marrying one whom she loved, the high regard the ancient Tamils had for chastity, the decorum and decency they expected in love affairs and the dexterity of the woman folk.

There is no such occasion in literature to show the disposal of the lover towards his love. But there is a theme in which the lover is known to have been despised by his love-lady-love because of his relation with other women. It is called *Maṟutham* where the lady will not hate her lover or husband openly. The form of literature which is used to display her hate towards her love is called *iṟaichi* which will appear to be a new language to the laymen.

“What a wonder, mountain of one who has not kept his word is resplendent with shining falls. It has shining falls! It has shining falls!” (*Kali* 41) It is said that this

stanza contains *iṛaichi* for; it implies the lover is a liar and the mountain of a liar must have neither rain nor river. The fauna and flora of the region are employed to interweave the form of *iṛaichi* in stanzas of *Aham* literature.

Literary conventions of such are employed in *Aham* literature whereas the themes other than love belong to *Puṛam*. Literature of *Puṛam* is divided into seven main themes. Each theme of *Aham* has a counterpart in *Puṛam* as follows:

<i>Aham</i>	<i>Puṛam</i>
<i>Kuṛiṇṇi</i>	<i>Vēṭci</i>
<i>Mullai</i>	<i>Vaṇṇi</i>
<i>Marutham</i>	<i>Uḷinai</i>
<i>Neythal</i>	<i>Thumbai</i>
<i>Pālai</i>	<i>vāhai</i>
<i>Peruṇḍhinai</i>	<i>Kāṇṇi</i>
<i>Kaikkiḷai</i>	<i>Pādān.</i>

If *Aham* is concerned with love, *Puṛam* is with all activities which are needed for conducting the family born out of love. Yet five out of seven themes of *Puṛam* are mainly concerned with war. Love and war are the two sides of a coin of life from the very olden days in all countries. Both need courage and valour. Where there is love there is war; where there is war there is love. Both go hand in hand. Ancient Tamil Nadu is not an exception to it. These two aspects of life serve as themes of literature even today.

Tholkappiyar, after discussing the *Aham* literature enters into the discussion of *Puṟam* giving equal importance to it. These themes of *Puṟam* and the poems composed on the basis of them serve as sources of the history of Ancient Tamil Nadu. He has systematized the age-old conventions of war and it is described as themes of literature.

Vēṭci leads the list. *Vēṭci* is said to be the act of the cattle raiding which is the first act of war. Acting stealthily during the night and achieving the object even at the face of opposition are the characteristics of *Vēṭci* as well as of *Kuṟiṇji*. So, they are put as counterparts of one another. Cattle-raiding is the first and foremost act in *Vēṭci*. When a king declares war against his enemy king, he is bound to protect the cows, the innocent animals, from the clutches of war and so he sends his men to the country of the enemy to bring the cattle to a safe place. So, on the pretext of cattle raiding, the war will flare out. There are fourteen stages for completing the cattle raid successfully (*Puṟam*-58 (163)). When the raid is made, the enemy king who owns the cattle will put resistance which also involves fourteen stages. So, there are twenty eight incidents in *Vēṭci* to serve as themes of literature. The worship of *Koṟṟavai* the Goddess of victory finds a place as theme of *Vēṭci*. The singing of God starts here. The act of invoking God to help man has produced a large quantity of literature which is styled as Devotional Literature.

There are given twenty one themes which are considered as common to all the divisions of *Puṟam* (*Puṟam* 164). The erecting of stone (*Nadu Kal*) which has six

stages, it is included in these divisions. It is for perpetuating the memory of the warriors who fought for the Country and died in the battle.

Vanji is said to be the counterpart of *Mullai* for both have the forest as the place of action and the winter season as suitable time. It is the theme of conquering a king who is ever bent upon having expansion upon the land of others. It has thirteen stages which serve as fine subjects of original compositions. *M ā ṛ ā yam*, *Peruñjoṛṇṇilai*, *Korṛavallai*, and *Thailṛji* are notable among them.

Next comes, *Ulinai* which is to besiege a well- guarded fort of a city and conquer it. It is the counterpart of the *Maṛutham* of *Aham*. Both are similar in having their place of action among the fields, the leaders being shut up inside the houses or places and having the early morning as time of action.

It has twenty stages which concern the invader and the invaded; these have served as sources of inspiration for the poets for producing original poems which are found to be numerous in the anthology of Sangam Poets.

Thumbai, the counterpart of *Neythal* is the culmination of war. Both *Thumbai* and *Neythal* have the sandy and muddy places of action, the sunset as time of action and the suffering and sorrow for women folk. *Thumbai* is aimed at destroying a king who comes to fight for displaying his might to others. (70 (167). It is systematized into twelve stages which form the theme of composition (72 (168).

Thaṛṇilai, *Eṇṇumai*, *Nallisaiṇilai* and *nulil* are the remarkable themes which describe the individual valour and devotion to the country and its king. Thus the ancient war-fare was systematized into a fine art of the purpose of using it as source

of literary themes, pertaining to *Puṇam*. There are many poems of this sort which are very interesting and instructive in the collection of the *Sangam* period.

Vākai which is said to be the *Puṇam* of *Pālai*, is the name given to the theme which describes the success not only in war but also in other walks of life. The definition *Vākai* as given by Tholkāppiyar in the verse *Porul*-74 clearly indicates that war was not considered as a life-long profession. It was one of many activities which engaged the attention of the king and the people. According to Tholkāppiyar, success in all walks of life must serve as theme of literature (75 (168)). It proves that the *Puṇam* Literature must be based upon the life of the people as of *Aham*.

The people portrayed in literature are given as the seer, king, wise man, sage, and artiste. Each consisting of nine divisions are given as themes. Here, it is to be noted that the strength of mind is taken into account as par with the bravery of the physical body. The abdication of the throne, the virtuous nature of the member of a great assembly, the possession of good conduct, the giving away of the wealth for the good cause, the forgiving of the misbehaved people, the earning of the wealth, the renunciation of power and wealth and the disinterestedness in worldly affairs are considered as activities, which concern the mental strength. When this forms the theme of literature, there is no doubt that they will ennoble the minds of the readers.

Kanji is the *Puṇam* of *Peṇundhinai*. Both have no particular places of action. They belong to all divisions of land and they resemble one another in the depiction of the opposite nature of ideal life. *Kanji* brings to our mind the ephemeral nature of the three virtues, '*aṇam*, *poruḷ* and *inbam*' as *peṇundhinai* describes the unnatural love.

Both are not conducive to the progress of the people. Yet they are useful to remind the people of their true purpose in life.

Kānji has twenty sub-divisions divided into two groups, each having ten. These themes give the opportunity to the poets for voicing forth their philosophical ideas to the world. Philosophy beings when the ephemeral nature of the world is known. It is a turning point in the evolution of Tamil literature. Love and war begin to lose its ground and the philosophy sets in.

These themes of *Kanji* are all of tragedy which is the starting ground for epic according to Aristotle. “He supposes poetry to begin in two kinds as the originating motive of all poetry tended by its very nature to diverge in two directions. Poetry namely, begins either as heroic or as satiric poetry; but out of heroic poetry develops tragedy, out of satire comes comedy” (Abercrombie 66). Heroism and tragedy go hand in hand.

Themes of the *Kānji* serve as good illustrations of this fact. They have formed as themes of many poems found in the anthology of *Puṟam* and of the Epics of tragedy.

Pādan means the song of the great and the might. The songs which are devoted to praise the kings, the patrons, the heroes and the God, come under this group. It is said to be the counter part of *Kaikkiḷai* in *Aham* for both resemble in offering praises to those who are loved, respected and honored without expecting reciprocations. In *Pādān* the poet addresses the Lord and in *Kaikkiḷai* the lover, the lady whom he loves, both have no limitations of time and place.

It is said to have eight primary divisions which are based upon the previous six groups concerning *Puṟam* and *Aham*. The songs which sing the praise of child, lord of particular town and family, God and the *kodiniḷai*, *kandhaḷi* and *vaḷḷi* come under this group. And, there are different of opinion in interpreting it. According to Iḷampuranar, they are the flag of the king, the destruction of the fort and the praise of the benefactor. According to Naccinarkkiniyar they denote the sun, the God which is formless and the moon respectively. But Prof. S. Somasundhara Barathiyar, having *kandhaḷ* instead of *Kandhaḷi*, says that these belong to *Vēṭci* and they are the themes in which the flag of the king and Lord Murukan are praised. When Lord Murukan is praised by males it is termed as *kandhaḷ* and when praised by females it is called *Vaḷḷi*.

Of these three interpretations, Naccinarkkiniyar's seems to be worth having though the meanings of *kodiniḷai* and *vaḷḷi* appear to be far-fetched. The interpretation of Iḷampurnar is simple and he is plain and that of Prof. Barathiyar lose its value because of his reading of *Kandhaḷi* as *kandhaḷ*.

Tholkāppiyar has formulated twenty six themes concerning *Pādān* and these are based upon the life of the people of his age. (*Puṟam* 90 (173)). This *Pādān* is a fertile ground for producing various kinds of literature. The poets are expected to serve as the unacknowledged legislators of the country, to critics those who are not beneficial to the people, to foresee the things to come and produce literature of all kinds.

Thus Tholkāppiyam is systematized the conventions to be observed in the making of literature bearing in mind that the Literature is an interpretation of life through imagination and the feelings as how Eliot outpours poetic drama.

Tholk ā ppiyar, after having discussed the contents of literature, enters into the channeling of emotions which we experience while enjoying the literature into the concept of Eliot's impersonal theory. Emotions are exhibited by physical actions without which they remain unknown. So Tholkāppiyar calls the experience of the emotion or the feeling *Meyppādu* means that it appears in the body.

He has given eight kinds of *Meyppādus* which are laughter, weeping, despisedness, wonder, fear, fortitude, anger, and delight. Then he points out the sources from which they spring. Each *Meyppādu* has four sources. Because of their sources, they amount to thirty two.

In *Aham* literature, love plays prominent role. So the experiences of a lady-love are graphically analyzed and put forth in order for the convenience of the poet. "What is poetry" asks Mill, "But the thought and words in which emotion spontaneously embodies itself" (Hudson 64). So it is the duty of the poets to be well versed in the art of displaying emotions in the literature. Further, it is to be known that the critical study of literature in his branch was as well advanced in the age of Tholkāppiyar. Very many poems, plays, novels, and songs owed their popularity in his age, solely to the skill of the writers to play on the feelings of audience and readers.

"In true art, the emotions are not only stirred they are also brought into artistic relation with other elements of the experience by the power of the poet's words. The

emotions are held to the experience and worked into its utility because they go to intensify the thought and imagination and thus vitalize those activities” (Gurrey 38)

The chapter on *Meyppādu* serves this purpose well. Use of figures of speech in poems is a great device employed by poets to light up the imaginations with pictures. So Tholkāppiyar has paid his attention to the treatment of the figures of speech in literature. He has named it *Ūvama Iyaḷ* the chapter on Smile.

“Simile is the simplest of the figures, and I supposed philologists would tell us it is the oldest; the easiest way to give an idea of an unknown thing” (Lamborn 87). The fact, what Tholkāppiyar has treated simile supports this view. There are metaphor, hyperbole and personification found used in poems of the post-Tholkāppiyar age. No mention is made about them in Tholkāppiyam. Simile is to be considered as the mother of all figures of speech. Comparison is the origin of using simile, from which other figures of speech are developed in course of time. Comparison is made mainly on the basis of four which are action, result, body and color (*Poruḷ* 276 (218)). It is pointed out that comparison is made to denote either excellence, or goodness or love or strength or inferiority (279,280 (218)). When comparison is made, the following principles are found to be observed:

- * The whole and the part of one object may be compared with the same of another object or with one another.
- * The object of comparison and the object compared must be in the similar nature.
- * Compared object may be used as object of comparison.
- * Object of comparison must be superior to those of compared.

- * Hyperbole is not desirable (285(219).
- * Use of many similes in succession is to be avoided.
- * Indication of similar nature between the object of comparison and the object compared is not compulsory.
- * Using of words of comparison (*uvama urupu*) must follow the traditional way.
- * There are some rules to be observed when *uvamappoli* is employed in *Aham* literature.

Uvamappōli is another name for *Uḷḷurai*. Tholkāppiyar has not included metonymy in the figures of speech but he has mentioned it in the book on Sol for it is used not only by poets but also by all. He has indicated that the use of the personification belongs to poetry.

Thus simile or *Uvamam* is given prominence and treated separately in chapter. This indicates its popularity in the age of Tholkāppiyar and its role in the making of literature. It lends style to the poem. F.L. Lucas views style without metaphor and simile is a day without sun or a wood-land without birds.” Tennyson laid down the first canon of poetry when he said speaking for all true poets it does not matter what we say, if people only knew; but it matters everything how we say it. *Uvamam* influences the form of saying and makes literature a thing of beauty.

Besides, the artists must be conversant with books of Geography, Astronomy, Zoology, Ethics, Religion, Agricultural Sciences, Theology and Sociology. Only such learned scholars could produce immortal works of art. In this, *Seyittam* written by Seyittianar is remembered for a few *sutras*, *Guna-Nool* by an unknown author, a few

stanzas available in *Sayanthanam* and *Mathivanam*, a *Nāttaka*, (drama) a Tamil book in *Sūtrās* and *Venbā* metres serves a great service to the generations. Only they could excel either in imaginative pieces (where persons and events are purely imagined) or realism based on the day-to-day life of the people. These two categories may be called the romantic works and the realistic works. Such works could be composed only by the greatest scholars. Many of the poets who lived before and just after Tholkāppiyar were thus noted for their matchless erudition.

Chapter III

Form And Content in Making Of Literature

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FORM AND CONTENT

IN MAKING OF LITERATURE

Form and Content is understood as a composition on a spectrum from the least to the most self-conscious communication. It is an awareness of the relative place of communicated words that lifts the issue of defining literature from a sterile debate to an act of engagement. The most important activity in receiving a work as literary, and in appreciating a literature, is to read as widely as possible both perceived literary and perceived non-literary writings and can assumed as the defining agent in literature. Content is the first criterion especially for implicit definitions of literature. It can be used to delineate compositions as Tales, Teachings, Lamentations, Hymns and Songs.

Tholkāppiyam has a strong resemblance with Sanskrit aesthetics. The first two chapters of Tholkāppiyam deal with grammar, while the third deals with literature (rhetoric). These are analogous to the three divisions in Sanskrit – *Siksha*, *Vyaakarna* and *Alankara Sāstra*. It is observed that the portions of Tholkāppiyam dealing with the form of letters, their origin, the four fold manner of compounds and seven *Vyakthis* agree with the Sanskrit grammatical works of *Panini*, *Yaskar's Nirukta*, *Patanjali's mahabashya*, etc.

In connection to these, explanations for the eight sentiments (*Rasas*), 10 states (*avastaas*) and 32 accessory feelings (*Vyabhichari bhavas*), there is full agreement between the Bharata Natyasastra and Tholkāppiyam. It is confessed by Tholkāppiyar.

In the matter of 32 *kavya yuktis* (literary practices), 10 *Kavya doshās* (literary blemishes) and *Sūtra lakshanās* (Characteristics of aphoristic compositions) also, Tholkāppiyam agrees with the Bharata Sastrā and Arthasāstra. Since Tholkāppiyar has a sense of tradition, Eliot too, has the same influence of Sanskrit literature through Vedas and Upanishads in his literature.

Thus, Tamil Literature falls into three great divisions; *Iyaḷ* (poetry), *Isai* (music), *Nāṭakam* (drama). Tholkāppiyam influences in the first division *Iyaḷ*, was treated under two heads, *Ḥlakkanaṁ* and *Ḥlakkiam*. The first is the art of correct and elegant writing which comprises all works on grammar, including logic, rhetoric, and prosody. The rules of grammar have been deduced from the best classics. *Ḥlakkiam* is a general term for all well-written works and includes all approved poetical compositions constructed on the rules laid down in *Ḥlakkanaṁ*.

Ḥlakkanaṁ is treated under five heads. The section on *Letters* constitutes that part of grammar which deals with the number, name, order, origin, form, content and combination of letters. The section on *Words* treats the four parts of speech, namely, noun, verb, particles, and adjectives. This includes etymology and syntax. The third section is *Matter* in which, by writing words, a discourse is formed. The section treats of amplification, of the passions and affections of the mind which act internally on man, and of things belonging to the external world. The section on versification contains the laws of prosody. Embellishment corresponds to the European rhetoric. Under the head of *Ḥlakkiam*, the Tamils have epic, lyric ethics, dramatic, scientific and philosophic pieces: of these by far the most numerous are the ethics. Māhabāratham

and Ramāyanam represent the epic; Naishdham the lyric; the poems of Valluvar; Silapathikāram, the dramatic; the works of Agasthiar, the scientific.

Tholkāppiyar dealt with letters and words in *Eluthu* and *Sol*. He devotes his final book '*Poru!*' to the theme of literature which, being the result or the fruit of the sentences formed by words and letters is the inevitable corollary to the Science of Language. Linguistic knowledge is indispensable for the study of an interwoven and there cannot be one without the other. Literature alone can nourish and sustain any living language. In fact, it is the finest flower of the language. Literature is the life and soul of a language. A language without literature cannot stand the mighty onslaught of the cruel time and it is bound to disintegrate and even wither out in course of time. Literature alone can guarantee immortality to any language. Moreover, it enriches our life. Life will become drab, dull and colorless without literature. It is a well known fact that we cannot forcibly separate linguistic knowledge and literary talent and that is why they have always combined the study of language with the Science of literature.

Ilakuvanār comments:

“Language is like a tree; and its words are like the leaves.

As the years go on, old leaves fall; and new leaves

take their place, but the tree remains the same.” (294)

This is very close to Eliot's 'Tradition and the Individual Talent'. Tholkāppiyar respects tradition and feels that linguistic knowledge must inevitably lead to literary appreciation, and hence he speaks of the Science of literature in *Porutpadalam* or *Porulathikāram*.

Porutpadalam speaks of the ways and means of writing various kinds of literature. Since literature is born out of life and rooted in life, we say that literature can be easily applied to human life also. The *Porutpadalam* helps us to have glimpses of the literary ventures of early Tamils and it portrays the life and culture of Tamils in those days. In this analysis, Tholkāppiyar lays it down as cardinal rule that literature must be rooted in life and it is on this basis he deals with literature and human life in *Porutpadalam* which is a tribute to the scientific spirit of Tholkāppiyam. To deal with, we have to go in detail into *Poruḷathikaram*, as it is mentioned in the introduction; the book on *Poruḷ* is divided into nine chapters as:

Ahaththiṇai: It speaks of the conduct of love affairs. A brief survey of general principles and the themes of *Aham* literature are given.

Puṇaththiṇai: It deals with the conduct of life other than love. A brief survey of general principles of *Puṇam* literature and its themes is given.

Kaḷavu: It means the secret love. The principles which are to be observed in portraying the course of secret love are described.

Karpu: It means the wedded love. The principles are to be observed in the life after marriage.

Poruḷ: It means that which is essential. Essential principles which are to be followed in portraying the life of the lovers before and after the marriage are noted, sanctioning the deviations from the established principles concerning the theme of literature.

Meyppādu: It means the facial expression of psychic feelings. Reactions of the heart because of enjoyment of literature are analyzed and grouped under various categories enabling the author to portray them in his composition.

Uvamam: It means simile. Various kinds of smiles to be used in literature are given and proper use of them is noted.

Seyyul: It means composition or prosody. Various forms of composition are given and described.

Marapu: It means tradition. Traditional use of words concerning animals and vegetables which are sorted on the basis of their possession of senses.

The chapters above said five topics depict the life of the people also for; literature is the mirror of life. So, the study of the book on *Porul* is focussed into literary study and detailed study is required for understanding and analysis. Thus, it begins with,

Aham and Puṇam:

Tamil literary works are conventionally divided into two groups of *Aham* and *Puṇam*. *Aham* works lay greater stress on the mental reaction of the hero or heroine to the external things; they are of a great psychological interest. They are intensely personal as the odes, where the play of emotions is dominant. It can be said that generally *Aham* works deal with love while *Puṇam* works deal with the external reactions of this passion, besides other elements. The place given to the theme of love in Tamil works, whether of *Aham* or *Puṇam* categories show how the ancient Tamils recognized the supreme force of this remarkable human sentiment. In fact, no

other human passion has contributed so richly to world literature as love and it is no wonder that we find some of the finest expressions of the same in ancient literary works of Tamil Nadu.

Love is the most refined of human sentiments and it serves as a touchstone for the civil and cultural attainments of a country. It is only this force of love that brings together the community devoid of distinctions of caste and religion; it is this force that serve as a background for all their actions and it is this which establishes a sense of equality amongst all individuals. Poetry dealing primarily with the emotions naturally springs from a soil, to speak, soaked in Love, As the *Aham* works refer primarily to the conventions of love and they claim a pre-eminent position in the realm of poetry.

Naccinarkkiniyar accounts love is called *Aham* for in his commentary: “As the great bliss enjoyed in union by a lover and his lady-love whose hearts throb in unison, is so delicate that it is not expressed openly before others, and as this naturally felt again and again by constant recollection in the mind, it is called *Aham*. Thus the recollection of the delights or bliss of Love is itself called *Aham*”.(12(3) The ethical codes of Love are divided into sevenfold under three main divisions known as *Kaikkilai*, *Aindhinai*, and *Perundhinai*.

Kaikkilai refers to one sided love where either the man or the woman loves the other without any reciprocation. The lover finds many impediments; may be, the beloved is too young to realize the implications of love and union, or the parents of the girl may not be favorably included. The lover is thus helpless and he finds no sign

of encouragement from the other side. Thus he gives unfulfilled desire and longing in words steeped in sorrow and intense emotional fervour. He finds some consolation in imagining the delights he had been refused. The girl might entirely be ignorant of his love. This is a kind of *Kaikkiḷai*. All types of one-sided love come under this category. Thus it may deal within love with a person who is ignorant of the fact. However, the author does not refer to the two aspects of love. The young girl who is indifferent to her lover may yield as time passes by, when she grows in maturity. Thus the girl who forms the theme of *Kaikkiḷai* is mentioned as *kāmām sālā ḷamaiyōl* (the immature young girl).

Perundhiṇai refers to unequal love. This is of four kinds. The lover who is thwarted tries to win his love by what is known as *madalēṇthal* or he may wait for the loved one till the period of maturity. One may pine in love which is inexpressible and which cannot be fulfilled. Or out of excessive love, one may force the loved one by sheer might and have one's satisfaction. These instances of love were rarely found in society; hence they do not occur often in literature as well.

Aindhiṇai refers to themes of perfect love or the perfect union of hearts. The aspects of this love are union, separation, variance, waiting and pity. When the lovers unite in love, it is called *kuṇṇi*. When they are separated later, it is called *pālai*. When the lady blames her separated lover in feigned anger and charges him of infidelity and so on, this kind of variance between the lovers is called *marutham*. However the lady-love waits in patience, with a sense of reality, for her lover who has gone on business, this patient waiting is called *mullai*, as the days pass by, if the lover

does not return, the wife suffers terrible pangs and this pining is called *neythal*. Thus the five conventional divisions of the regions are used to refer to the five types of love known as *Aindhinai*.

The term *thinai* denotes both the code of behavior and region. Thus, *kuṛiṇji* means canons of union and the mountainous regions with their neighborhood. *Marudham* region stands for the code of variance in conduct and refers to the plains with fields. *Mullai* indicates *iṟuththal* code of conduct besides the region of forests and woods. *Neythal* denotes the course of pity besides the sea and the coastal region.

Pālai which refers to the pangs of separation might have remained without a particular region for it, for a long time. So the ancient Tamils called their land *nānilam* which means the land of four divisions. Then, *pālai* began to denote the war tracts of rocks and lands scattered about in all regions, besides denoting separation.

Ilangovadikal, the author of *Silappathikāram*, says that the *mullai* and *kuṛiṇji* regions, being dried and became waste, take the form of *pālai* (*Cilambu-Kadukan-Kathai* (64-66)). Thus, in course of time, *pālai* began to denote both separation and the region.

The terms *kuṛiṇji*, *marutham* etc., first denoted the trees, plants and creepers, found in the regions. The ancient Tamils who lived in harmony with natural objects, swayed by their influences, called the region *kuṛiṇji* which abounded in *kuṛiṇji* trees and the other region *marutham* where *marutham* tree was in abundance. Later the characteristic ways of life, typical of the region came to be signified by the name of

the region itself. Hence, the names of the regions meant for the codes of life prevalent in various regions.

Then the poet describes the phenomenon of time. Time was broadly measured in two ways as *perumpoḷuthu* (the long period) and *sirupoḷuthu* (the short period). The long division of *perumpoḷuthu* refers to the six seasons of *kar*, (the early rainy season), the *kuthir* (later rainy season), *munpani* (the early spring) and *muthuvēnil* (the later spring). The smaller divisions of time (*Sirupoluthu*) refers to the divisions of a day into evening, midnight, dawn morning, midday, and afternoon. Of course there are some who hold that *sirupoluthu* consists of five parts and not six. Strictly speaking, it consists of six parts.

Long before Tholkāppiyar the people of Tamil Nadu were conversant with the various units of time like *Nāḷikai* (a unit referring to an hour divided by 2 ½)day, week, month, season, year etc., Also every *thinai* had its own point of time or season for which it was favored. Thus the *mullai* region was noted for the early rainy season of *kār* and the evening, while the *kuṟiñji* region was noted for its later rainy season and the dawn. Naccinarkinniyar gives a beautiful account of the time suited to the various regions, giving reasons for the choice as well.

The early rainy season (*kār*) comprises the months of *Āvani* and *Purattāsi*. It is said that there was a time when *Āvani* was taken as the first month of a year. Even today in Kerala, (one of the states in India) the year is counted from the month of *Āvani*. But today, we begin from *Ciththirai* as the first month of the year. It remains to be found out how this change came about in counting the months of the

year. *Aippasi* and *kārththikai* are the months of *kuthir* season. The early winter months are *Mārkali* and *Thai* and the later winter months are *Māsi* and *Panguni*. *Ciththirai* and *Vaikasi* form the early spring while *Āni* and *Ādi* the later spring. All the names of the twelve months of the year thus divided are Tamil names which were used in the period of Tholkāppiyar.

The term *karupporuḷ* (that which forms the nucleus) refers to the offshoots of the first phenomena of space and time. This means all things are useful for the day-to-day life of the people. They are God, food, animals, trees, birds, drums, occupation, and *yāl* (18 *Poruḷ* (155).

Proper names are not mentioned in *Aham* while they are used in *Puṇam* songs. If the *Puṇam* theme is mingled in the *Aham*, the proper name may be used. The names used in *Aham* themes were classified two fold in each *thiṇai* as '*thiṇai marii iya peyar* and *thiṇai nilaippeyar*'. These may be professional or occupational names. The *thiṇai marii iya peyar* of each *thiṇai* indicates the use of the following names: *Vēttuvar* (the hunters), *Kuṇavar* (hill tribes) *Āyar* (the cowherds) and *Uḷavar* (the peasants or ploughmen). The *thiṇai nilaippeyar* or names of region are also called *uripporuḷ peyarkaḷ* -They are *Veṇṇan*, *Aṇṇal*, *Uḷavan* etc.,

The heroes or the most important persons of songs should be positively eminent persons from all points of view. Those who lived a free life, cultured and refined, can alone excel in matters of Love. Of course love is also common to all beings, whatever is the rank or attainment. There were many servants and attendants in those days who could have well served as heroes of songs. But it would not be

easy or possible to compose poems thus suited to the five *thinai*s having the commoners as the heroes of poems. The categories of *kaikkiḷai* and *perundhiṇai* give ample scope for such themes. Thus the poet lays down the restrictions as to the treatment of themes, without forgetting the possibility-though rare-of commoners figuring as heroes in poetry. It may be the servants, attendees and slaves who succeed in their love. However in such cases, it is no doubt true that the course of their love is subject to a lot of impediments. Even if they succeed, they are not in a position to lead happy lives thereafter. If a servant loves his master's daughter, she may naturally be indifferent to him because of the inequality of status. This comes under *kaikkiḷai*. If he then is so much overpowered by his feelings of Love as to attempt to violate her while sleeping, it becomes *perundhiṇai*. If by chance she too loves him, she may do here love also wanes and she may be full of remorse for her error of judgment. Thus Tholkāppiyar shows remarkable practical sense in ruling out the love of "Men in low status" as not belonging to the five *thinai*s; he gives the theme its right place in *kaikkiḷai* and *perundhiṇai*; so he says;

"Adiyōr pāṅginum vinaivalar pāṅginum

Kadivarai ila puṇaththu enamanār pulavar" (23(155)

(The Scholars say that having heroes among servants and officials is not prevented in literature dealing with 'Puṇam' (matter' other than true love).

The parents of a girl in love is opposed to marriage with the lover, the lover might also elope with his beloved without the knowledge of the parents. This elopement was called *koṇḍu thalaik kaḷithal*. Afterwards the mother would indulge in

lamentations over her lost daughter. The distracted mother would roam about the streets of the big city searching for her daughter; the foster-mother would even go out of the city for the purpose. The *thōḷi* is the loving companion of the heroine or the lady-love who would confide all her secrets to her; the *thōḷi* would stand by her through thick and thin and help her friend to fulfill her wishes. She would help the heroine to elope with her lover; she would console the distracted mother and the foster-mother who would be immersed in grief at the loss of the daughter; she would point out how wrong it was to grieve over the daughter who had gone away in love.

Many poems were composed on the theme of separation either before or after the marriage of the lovers. The cause that led to such separation are threefold; they are (i) education (*othal*), (ii) message to be carried (*thūthu*), and (iii) enmity or war. It was natural for men to leave their wives for purposes of higher learning, for carrying messages as ambassadors among rulers or for taking part in the battles among rulers. Those who were sent to foreign lands for study should be scholarly and wise, with a remarkable practical sense. Also those who serve as ambassadors in foreign country were noted for their wisdom, learning and personal charm. Therefore ethic power lays down that those who leave their wives or beloved at home for purposes of study or as a ambassadors, should be portrayed in poetry, as great scholars, and eminent in wisdom, hence his words.

“Ōthalum thūthum uyarndhor mēna” (26(156).

(Among them, higher education and ambassadorship are concerned with eminent people)

Poems were composed under the two divisions of *kaḷavu* and *karpu* (secret love and married love). As *kaikoḷ* is common to both it is mentioned there. There is also another kind of separation caused by the *paraththai*. As this cause is concerned only with the post-marital life, it will be mentioned in *karpiyal*.

In the course of *kaḷavu* (secret love) and *karpu* (married love) the lover may be accompanied by his beloved. However, if he happened to go abroad, he should not take his wife with him on the seas.

Munnir valakkam madhdu vōdu illai (34(157))

(Voyage is not undertaken with the wife)

It is understood that this right to go on the seas was denied to woman, though they enjoyed all the other privileges. Voyage was forbidden to women in the interest of the welfare of the land. If the wife stayed in the country, she might be the source of attraction for the husband abroad and he would return to his native land. But if the wife too went along with him, there was every chance of their settling down abroad; wherever they lived, they might be made to feel it was their own land. It was for this reason that women were forbidden to go on the seas.

Madalēṛuthal was another privilege which men alone enjoyed and was denied to women. If a man loves a woman, and if he is not able to marry her in the natural course, he might observe what is known as the process of *Madalēṛuthal*. *Madal* means the stamp of the palmyra leaf. The figure of a horse would be made by using this: the lover; would mount the horse and cause it to be drawn through the streets. During such a procession, he would hold aloft a flag with the figure of his beloved

painted on it. The palmyra leaves would cut his limbs and blood would ooze out. This was a kind of self-mortification to achieve his purpose. The wise and elderly men would then take pity on him, approach the parents of the girl and arrange for the marriage. The parents and their daughter also would be moved to give their consent. If they would not, the lover who thus could continue to mortify himself would die for his cause.

But this process of self-immolation was not to be observed by women in love. There are no literary piece with such theme. If this were done, it would bring shame upon women who should be noted for modesty hence the lines:

Eththiṇai maruṅginum madkadūu umadanmēl

Porṇudai neṇimai inmaiṇāna (35(157))

(In any aspect of love, the lady-love cannot have the right of riding on the horse made of palmyra-stem.)

In fact this method of self-immolation on the part of man-in-love itself comes under *perundhiṇai* category of themes, as it indicates unequal or one-sided love. Hence it is said to be absolutely unsuited to women.

The poet mentions ‘similes’ in the same *iyaḷ* about the nature of the songs which come under aham and the characteristics of the similes and comparison which serve to clarify the subject matter of the poems. The form of the verse or song must be suited to the theme; the manifold emotional variations suited to Aham themes find their medium in the meter of *kali* and *paripādal*. These two meters come in handy; to take sounds echo the sense. There are the most musical of rhythmic beats.

Tholkāppiyar, has laid down that literature should be based on life; it is not a mere product of fancy. The day-to-day events of life are colored by imagination and presented as a work of art. It should be natural and Tholkāppiyar stresses this fact again and again, only to show that literature should not be removed from life or reality by sheer play of fancy. What is thus a natural product of life is called by him *pulaṇeri vaḷakkam*-the code of the learned. The term given to signify truth to nature as a significant aspect of literature shows the remarkable critical sense of Tholkāppiyar. It is this truth to nature that imparts a universal significance to literary works; he who understands this aspect of poetry is the greatest of poets. Hence the casual name of the literary convention:

Nādaka vaḷkkinum ulakiyaḷ vaḷakkinum

Pādal sāṇṇapulaṇeṇi vaḷakkam

Kaliyē pariaṭṭu āyiru pāṅginum

Uriyathākum enmanār pulavar (53(161).

(The poets say that the usage of poets which consists of imaginary usage and the factual usage as found in day-to-day life will have ‘*kali*’ and ‘*paripādal*’ as the meter-forms (which are specially suitable for describing the love aspects)

The term, ‘*enmanār pulavar*’, indicates that many of the poets who lived before Tholkāppiyar had established this literary convention of truth to nature in their works. Therefore centuries before Aristotle came and laid down the conventions of literature in ancient Greece, the ancient poets of Tamil land had clearly evolved a

healthy literary tradition which holds good even today and which is one of the fundamental aspects of world literature.

Comparison is a device that serves to bring out the meaning of a particular context clearly. It is a device to explain the unknown by means of the known: thus all can easily comprehend this device. However, the comparisons used in Aham songs are subtle and it requires scholarship to realize the full value of many instances of this convention. They are not obvious on the surface; they are so intervened with the subject matter that we have to take troubles to catch their tone and color. The very term *uḷḷurai* used to refer to comparison suggests its concealment.

Vīṅgu nīravil nīlam pakarpavarvayaḷ koṇḁa
Nāṅgar malar cūḷ thaṇdhur pukunḁha varivaṇḁu
Ōṅguyar elil yānaik kanai kadam kamaḷ naṛṛam
Āṅgavai virunḁharṛap pakal alkik kaṅgulan
Viṅgīrai vadukkoḷa viḷuṇarṇ punarṇdhavar
Thēṅgamaḷ kathuppinuḷ arumbaviḷ naṛu mullai
Pāyṇḁhu ūthip padar thirṇthu pandu tham maṛīiya
Pūmpoykai maṛandhu ullap punalani nallūra (66 Kalithotokai (86)).

The obvious meaning of this *marutham* song in *kali* metre is as follows:

(“The dark-blue *kuva!a* flowers, blessing on the rising waters, are brought to the city for sale. Along with the flowers which blossomed in the fields, the (honey) bees also come surrounding them. They (the bees) drink the sweet liquid oozing out of the ears of the magnificent elephant in the town during the day-time, and during the night they drink the nectar of the fragrant jasmine flowers worn by the lady-love who

has enjoyed the company of her lover. Thereafter, they forget from where they came and forget the other flowers as well”).

The latest meaning of the passage is such,

(The terms *vingu nir* mean the quarters of the public women or *paraththai*. The blue blossoms of *kuvala* stand for voluptuous prostitutes. Those who sell the flowers are those who come in chariots parading the women. The bees that surround the flowers stand for the hero of the song. The sweet liquid oozing out of the rogue elephant refers to public women again. The terms *iravumullai* indicate ‘the woman of easy virtues’ in her house. The old dwelling place forgotten is the house of the hero and the tank or *kulam* means his own house. The flower blossoming there is the wife of the hero).

Thus the passage speaks about the complaint of the wife who is angry with her husband, having knowledge of his faithless activities. He has spent his time in reckless joy with public women paraded in chariots by musicians; he has enjoyed the company of *paraththai* at night; thus he has forgotten his loyal wife. This indirect hit on the husband is indeed beautiful. All the happening is mentioned in the form of images; this passage is indeed of high poetical value because of the sustained imagery. It must be noted that the ‘Sangam’ (ancient) poets revealed in the use of images and symbols; their imagination brings about the synthesis of all apparently irrelevant details and makes out of them a supreme work of art. Here comparison is not apparent, unless we know the context. As this derive of latent comparison enhances the literary beauty of *Aham* songs, Tholkāppiyar includes this device also among the conventions of composition.

Love is the most potent force that enables man and woman to like together as husband and wife, in order “to propagate human species”. Marriage is of various kinds. It differs from place to place and time to time. Of all kinds, the marriage based on love is the best. It is only such a marriage which means the fulfillment of love that avoids all distinctions of caste, creed and religion and enables a man and a woman to live together drawn by a single force that sets at rest every other consideration. During the time of Tholkāppiyar, Love played dominant role in bringing the two sexes together in wedlock. The term *kaḷavu* refers to the love-making of a young man and a young woman drawn towards each other by mutual friendship. As their friendship grows without the knowledge of others, it is called *kaḷavu* or “Secret Love”.

Forms of marriage looks as though the contact between the northerners and the Tamils had begun at the time of Tholkāppiyar. The northerners were called *maraiyōr* which means those who conceal; it was perhaps because they concealed some parts of knowledge quite inappropriate to the Tamil ways of life, in their books, they came to be called as such. Tholkāppiyar refers to the existence of eight kinds of marriage prevalent among the *maraiyōr*. As the commentary given by Naccinārkkiniyar they are as follows;

Brahamam: This means the marriage of a forty-eight year old bachelor with a twelve year old girl offered to him as dharma after the first period of menstruation and before the second. She is to be given in marriage with suitable ornaments. Both must belong to the same *kōththiram*.

Prajāpatyam: Giving away the daughter in marriage with double the dowry as given by the bride groom's party.

Āridam: This means the offer in marriage of girl decked in jewels to a suitable person. Both the bride and the bridegroom are made to stand between a cow and an ox whose horns and hoofs are plated with gold and then they are blessed to live in joy like the animals, and holy water is poured as a symbol of giving away the daughter.

Theyvam: This means the offer of a girl in marriage to the suitable one among those who do the noble sacrifice of *Yaham* in the presence of the *Fire of Yaham*.

Āsuram: This means the marriage of valour where a person marries one after proving his manliness by subduing a wild ox, shooting a wandering hog by an arrow or by proving his skill in archery.

Rākshsam: This means a forced marriage where a person carries away a maid by sheer force without the will of the parents or the maid.

Paisāsam: This means the act of union with the old, the drunkards or the sleeping ones; also it refers to marrying a woman leading a disgraceful life.

Kāṇḍharvam: This means just a meeting of a man and a maid falling in love with each at first sight and the uniting in love, just like the *Kāṇḍharvas* (the Heavenly males) and their beloveds in heaven. Only the last form of *Kāṇḍharva* marriage suits the Tamil ways of life so far as ancient Tamil Nadu is concerned. *Kāṇḍharvam* as such may set aside considerations of moral code. But *kaḷavu* as explained in Tamil works means love never bereft of moral code as pointed out by *Naccinārkkiniyar*.

So far as the two lovers met of their own accord, both the *Kāṇḍharva* form and the Tamil convention agree with each other. Some are of the opinion that these eight

fold classification is of a later origin. The Mahabharatha refers to this classification. The age of the Mahabharatha (in Sanskrit) is said to be 10th Century B.C. Tholkāppiyar who belonged to not later than the sixth century B.C has made analysis of the Tamil ways of marriage with the northern ways. Of course the northern conventions of marriage were not prevalent in Tamil Nadu at that time. Nor did Tholkāppiyar enjoin that they should be followed. On the other hand, it is clearly mentioned that the Tamil convention of marriage based on love should be adopted by poets in their writings. It may be questioned whether there was anything wrong in assuming northern conventions in literature though they might not be true to what happens in Tamil land. But it must be remembered that literature is not so cut off from life, and that Tholkāppiyar himself has laid stress on this aspect of truth to nature.

Then the question arises as to why Tholkāppiyar has referred to the alien eightfold divisions of marriage. Perhaps the Tamil convention was mocked at by the foreigners; perhaps they wanted their own alien customs to be adopted by the Tamils. Tholkāppiyar might have then tried to prove that the Tamil way of marriage also was not anything strange or unheard of. He might have just tried to show that it was more or less the same as the *Kāṇḍharva* marriage, so much colorized in Sanskrit works.

Onṟe veṟe enṟu iru pālayin,

Onṟi uyarṇḍha pālathu aṇaiyin

Othatha kiḷavanum kilaththiyum kāṇpa

Mikkōṇayinum kadivarai inṟe (93Porul (175))

Naccinārkkiniyar interprets the passage as follows:

“A man and a maid belonging to the same region or different regions, agreeing with each other in all the ten qualities of birth and so on, meet each other, either impelled by destiny or God’s will. The man is a little superior to the woman in certain aspect, it does not matter” (48). The westerners believe that love is God’s will or bound by destiny. It is believed that all the happenings in life are pre-ordained and to be attributed to Fate would not give freedom of choice to their own sons or daughters so far as Love is concerned. If they believe that love also is born of pre-destination, then there would be no trouble. But those who want to safeguard caste and religious distinctions are generally opposed to love leading to marriage, because it is likely to end up in their social recognition. Even the old Aryans did not approve of marriage based on Love for it would strike at the root *Varṇāśrama dharmā*. However, the Tamil community of the Tholkāppiyar period honored only the love-marriage and the poet naturally felt that even in literary works marriage should proceed from love and not from any other consideration.

The passage gives rise to another, yet simpler interpretation also. The two sexes of beings-man and woman-can fall in love with each other. As the two grow older-following strictly the righteous path without allowing their minds to stray about and as the sex-instinct urges them, they love each other, completely identifying themselves with each other and want to get married. When they think of marriage, they become aware of the powerful force of love in their hearts, if they are suited to each other in all aspects. There is nothing wrong if he happens to be somewhat superior to the woman in certain aspects”

This interpretation, without reference to fate or God's will, is quite reasonable; this is universal in significance in so far as it is applicable to all people, at all times. There is no doubt about the facts that in ancient Tamil land only the marriage on love was acclaimed as the best and most desirable form. Love marriage does not mean any indiscriminate or choice of a woman or a man. It does not mean the first effusions of feelings which will not ripen into love. The stress, it must be noted, is on the man and the woman who perfectly agree with each other in all aspects. What are these qualities in which the lovers should be in harmony with each other? As the harmony is an essential pre-requisite for love-marriage, Tholkāppiyar himself gives an account of the qualities in the chapter of *Meypāadu*.

“Piṟappē, kudimai, āṇmai, āṇdodu

Uruvu, niruththa kāma vāyil

Niraiye, arulē, uṇarvodu thiru ena

Muṟaiyuraḱ kilāṇḁha oppinathu vahaiyē”(273 *Poruḷ* (217)

(Nativity, family trait, strength, age, the means of enjoying love, chastity, graciousness, understanding and wealth-these being said in order-are the kinds of similarity between the lover and the love)

The two who loved each other must be suited to each other in birth, code of conduct, moral standard or manliness or boldness, age, personal appearance, the intensity of love, virtues, grace, wisdom (or knowledge) and wealth (or riches). These are the ten essential points of agreement between the lovers. Birth indicates here birth in a good family noted for moral uprightness. Family (*kudi*) is one thing;

caste is another. There was no question of caste in those days. One born in good family imbibes certain traditional virtues of the family; hence the moral standard is mentioned next. In fact, one's family is judged by one's conduct as Thiruvalluvar says: "*Oḷuka mudaimai kudimai*" means having good conduct is the sign of being born in good family. (Thirukkural 133). Thus proper conduct is the touch-stone of the family from which a person hails. The term '*ānmai*' which strictly means manliness is used here to indicate generally power or healthier physical or mental-on the part of both the lover and the beloved. It is no doubt true that a weak or weak-willed person-whether it be a man or a woman-will not be able to stand "this fret and fever" of life. Thus, both the man and the woman must be suited in health or power which also ensures a perfect joy in union. As for agreement in age, the poet indicates the proper marriageable age of the man and of the woman. It was held in those days that the female was twelve years. There might be a difference of four years between them. The agreement in appearance refers to the personal charm of both and their general shape. Thus a short man should not marry a tall maid, and vice versa; nor should not marry a tall maid, and vice versa the term *kā mavāyil* indicates the intensity of love felt by both lover and his beloved. The love and the desire for union must be equally shared by both; otherwise the marriage will be a failure. The term '*niṟai*' indicates the constancy of the men; it means chastity. Today the term is generally associated only with women and we believe that men are not so much bound to be chaste as women. But Tholkāppiyar considers chastity as equally applicable to both men and women. Only when we grant this fact, domestic life will be happy. Next '*aṟul*' refers

to grace or kindness towards the suffering of others. Both should of course share this quality to make married life a success. ‘*Unarvu*’ means the knowledge of what is proper to be done in the day-to-day life. ‘*Thiru*’ indicates the quality that endears the couple to all who meet them. *Naccinārkkiniyar* gives an interesting interpretation of this term. He means ‘*Thiru*’, is not only the possession of ‘*poruḷ*’ (or material wealth), and the enjoyment of material pleasures after earning material wealth but also a certain condition of the mind which feels rich and contented always. Thus even if ‘*seḷvam*’ or wealth is taken to mean “the perfect content of the mind”, it is quite necessary for married life to make it happy. Moreover it may be taken as simple wealth, for, only when both the bride and the bridegroom are equally rich, they can live with self-respect as individuals. Otherwise, it is likely that the wealthy person might mock at the poor partner and keep the person in his or her mercy, as the case may be. Hence the saying, “*Poruḷ illārkkku ivvulakamillai*” (no place in world for those do not possess material wealth) (*Thirukkural* 247). It is no doubt true that material wealth is an extraneous factor that should not be an impediment in the way of love. Yet, at the same time, we find many instances of broken marriages because of economic inequality as well. Unless both are equal in their material possessions, they cannot be perfectly happy in this world, so long as social environment affects individuals.

It looks as though there were plenty of opportunities for men and women, thus suited to each other, to meet as often as possible, in ancient Tamil Nadu. They should have moved freely with each other, with a sense of equality. The ancient society of

Tamil Nadu seems to have afforded greater freedom to the maids of those days. Then only love was possible for it must be preceded by meeting. Though they might have met by the working of Fate, they might not be ignorant of each other's ways before falling in love with each other. When one of the lovers tries thus to know the other's heart, it is but natural there were many misgivings and doubts. These misgivings of lovers are thus the natural consequence of courting.

The man, for instance, should not allow himself to be completely infatuated by the personal charm and beauty of maid, the moment he sees her; he should not be taken in by her apparently winning manners. The hero should first try to find out the true personality of the maid he likes, however attractive she might be outwardly. He has to know her heart and mind before judging her. This is indeed a difficult and even laborious task indeed for the lover. He should never fall in love at first sight. This is applicable to the maid also. The code of love-making demands the same securing of conduct on the part of the girl in love (94 *Porul*). This aspect of love-making has been stressed so much just to avoid reduction or filtering in love. Hence the large part assigned to doubts and misgivings of lovers in Tamil Literature.

However poets observe certain conventions regarding heroes and heroines who appear in their works. When the hero of a poem, for instance, meets the good and attractive heroine, he would first wonder about her identity. He would be full of anxiety to know of her. He would compare her with all that is gracious in life (Thirukkural 1081). Similarly the heroine would be anxious to know all about the hero. She would go further in her companions, wondering whether it was *Lord Muruka*, or some other God standing before her. 'The first feeling that the heroine is

not of love but of fear', says Naccinārkkiniyar. According to him as there was no means known to her by whom doubts could be cleared, the heroine should avoid doubts regarding the identity of the hero. He seems to hold the view that the women, as a class, are ignorant.

The doubts thus arising are said to be cleared in certain ways common to both the hero and the heroine. It is the eyes that play the most important role in the meetings of lovers. They serve not only as organs of sight but also as tools subjugate the one to the other. Thus it is the eyes that speak the language of love and expose the desire for union. Words are felt to be of no use when the eyes of lovers commune with each other (96 *Poru*173). How do the lovers express their love by means of eyes-by certain meaningful looks? It was not quite refined to express their desire in words. This is true of all people on earth. Love, supposed to be tender than a flower, is more felt and understood than expressed. Thus the very nature of love is against expression.

Besides, there are certain characteristics typical of the two sexes, which make it difficult for them to express their desire openly in words. However much the equality of sexes might be praised, man as man is different from woman as such. They cannot both be of the same nature. Therefore *Tholkāppiyar* proceeds to give an account of the distinct characteristics of man and woman and their feelings. Thus he concludes that it is but natural for such beings to express their desire only by gestures or signs of love, not by expression.

The natural qualities of man are pride (*perumai*) and might (*uran*) (91). Pride or *perumai* is interpreted by Naccinārkkiniyar as resulting from knowledge,

efficiency, fame, charitable disposition, reasoning power, culture, friendship and fear of sinful deeds. *Uran* or might is taken to mean manliness and physical might which reveals itself without these qualities, without being sure of the response of the heroine first, would not give expression to his love by words. As for the female, however much she is educated whatever be her position, she would never come forward to express her love first. Love is the one emotion which makes even those women who compete with men in occupation observes silence. A woman cannot easily get over her womanly qualities. What are they? They are fear, bashfulness and modesty (92).

In matters of love, women have to be more cautious than men. They have to fear the consequences if their love fails, more than men. Men can love more than one lady; so if they fail once, it does not matter. But women can love only once in their lives. 'Thus disappointment in love is the greatest calamity that may be fall a maid. Naturally, with the future lying dark before her, she has to venture on love full of fear for the unknown consequences.

Nān or bashfulness is natural quality of a woman. It is so evasive a quality that it can be explained only showing the instance of a woman experiencing bashfulness. It is thus a distant quality quite characteristic of a woman. Naccinārkkiniyar interprets the term as indicating the feeling of modesty in a woman resulting from tokens of love. But as this bashfulness may spring either before tokens of love or after meeting the lover or husband, Naccinārkkiniyar's interpretation may go wrong.

Madan means the feigned ignorance of women. Though a maid may know that she is being loved by a man, she might pretend to be ignorant of his love just to

know the truth or the intensity of love. No woman naturally would first express her love. The lovers who have thus expressed their love by gestures and other tokens try to fulfill their love in more ways than one. They try to meet each other under some pretext or other as often as possible. At times one of them may come to the same place where the other was met first and the person might meet the other on the way. This happy coincidence is called, "*Idandhalaippādu*". Thereafter both are immersed in thoughts of each other. As the hero and the heroine are thus thinking only of each other, having given up all other pursuits in life, both ignores the needs of their body and they naturally become lean or reduced. Thus they pine away in thought. At such times they may give expression to the delights of union which they consider as the only remedy to save their lives. When they find a good companion or a bosom friend who pities them, they may express their love openly. Thus the hero expressed his love to the friend and the heroine to the '*thōḷi*'. Whenever they turn their eyes, they see none but their beloved. They forge their duty and other obligations. They linger in sorrow, revolving their love. Finally, they decide to put an end to their lives if their love does not succeed.

Even if the hero does not express the cause of his sufferings, his friend will understand it because of the change in the hero's behavior. Then the friend tries what he can to help hero in his love. He arranges for his meeting with his lady-love. The context when the pining hero finds comfort in the words of his sympathetic friend is called '*pāngarkkūttam*.' Similarly the context when the pining heroine find comfort in the words of her female companion is called '*thōḷiyarkkūttam*'.

The lovers may meet during day-time or at night. The place where they meet during day-time is called '*pakaṛ kuṛi*', while that where they meet at night is '*Iravukkuṛi*'. The '*pakaṛ kuṛi*' will usually be outside the house. The '*iravukkuri*' may be in a part of the house; and those inside may be able to hear them. Sometimes the lovers may also be disappointed without finding the partner in the prescribed place.

The course of secret love, following a partner of its own, gradually comes to be known to the world outside. The female companion of the pining lady begins wondering on the changes-physical and mental-undergone by the heroine, if she does not suggest her love to her friend. Thereafter the companion clears her doubts as to the cause by certain tokens or gestures of the lady in love. She is sure it is the disease of love that causes her friend to wither. Then the heroine takes bold to ask for her companion's help in fulfilling her wish to meet her lover. She implores her companion most movingly.

At a time when the heroine and her companion are thus together engaged in conversation the hero might come there. Then from the peculiar reactions of the lady-in-love, the wise companion understands the secret piercing a certain mischievous glee. Thus her doubt is cleared and the guess is confirmed by sheer accident. This context is called '*mathiyudambaduththal*'. Then the news or the secret spreads from the female companion to the 'foster-mother' i.e. *Sevilli*. It goes from the foster mother to the mother and from the mother to the father of the girl who is in love. As already mentioned it is not becoming of a heroine in love to approach his lover first and

express her love. This is against the code of bashfulness or modesty. However, it does not mean that she would keep quiet at a time when she finds impediments to her love. May be, the virtue of modesty is to be honored more than life; but chastity is nobler than modesty. She thus rebels against adverse circumstances, if there by any and then to preserve her chastity, she may even go out to meet her lover in his house. If under such circumstances she has to express her love in words, there is nothing wrong in it (113*Poruḷ* (182)).

Therefore such statements of the lady-in-love also find a place in *Aham* literature, as pointed out by Tholkāppiyar. When the hero and heroine meet and move intimately in secret, however careful they may be, their love will gradually come out to be known to all. It is known by a few at the beginning and as the days pass by, more and more will get to know it. The context, when only to a few have knowledge of the secret, is called '*ambal*'. When more people come to know of it, the context is called '*alar*'. Thus the two conditions of '*ambal*' and '*alar*' give publicity to love. It is the hero who is largely responsible for the publicity that the love gains. It is he who comes to the lady's house often and it is he who makes others suspects him of love, because of the characteristic changes of conduct and behavior. The heroine, on the other hand, remains at home and as it is to not natural for women to reveal secrets in public in a rash and hasty manner, love is often made public only by men (139 (188)).

As the two conditions of '*ambal*' and '*alar*' become more intense, the heroine finds the state intolerable; she suffers much and rebels at home; naturally she is watched more carefully at home, while talks of marriage begin, it is the parents of the

hero who usually approach first the parents of the heroine for talks of marriage. The parents of the girl may consent for the marriage without any knowledge of the previous intimacy between their daughter and the lover or they may not consent also and arrange for the girl's marriage with some one else. When the heroine suffers in love and looks pale and sickly, the parents might try to find the cause of her sorrow by means of '*kaḷangu*' or '*veryāttam*'; of course the truth will not be known by adopting these methods. She will continue to suffer. If the disease of love grows more overpowering, the heroine might even prattle in her dreams and wake up crying sorrow and fear. Thus the heroine's love will come out by various ways. If it is decided to go against her wish, she would leave her home and elope with her lover. This context of the heroine in love leaving her home without the knowledge of her parents is called '*udanbōkku*'.

If love is known to all, chastity must be preserved. In other words, both the hero and the heroine thus limited in love should be married. If no marriage takes place, both will die. The saying '*karṇam thappin maraṇam*' owes its origin to this habit; '*karaṇam*' means the rites of marriage. "If love is not solemnized by means of marriage; death will be the result"(139(188). Hence, '*Karpu*' is a matter to be analysed here.

The term '*karpu*' is taken to mean the distinct virtue of chastity. It is said to be applicable only to women today. It is said that this term means the virtue of a wife who never thinks of anybody by way of love in her mind except her husband. It is derived from the fact that the man and a woman born in different places come

together as husband and wife and choose to live together bound by an unseen tie or bond of wedlock. Thus what is imagined and established as seal is '*karpū*'. Naturally this virtue is stained the moment either of the couple. This code of chastity is based on the principle of strictly observed monogamy; and the etymology of the term implies that it is virtue to be cultivated by both the husband and the wife.

At the time when a man would enjoy the right to marry more than one woman, this virtue cannot be laid down for men. Similarly in any land where a woman can marry more than one man, this code of chastity is ruled out for her. As love is an essential pre-requisite for marriage, this virtue of chastity is an essential pre-requisite for love. It is this virtue which enables those united in love to enjoy their love and live happily together. Hence, the importance is given to '*karpū*' or '*chastity*' in Tamil literature. Naturally this virtue has been applauded by all as supreme.

The lovers who used to meet alone without the knowledge of others might continue to do so continuously for a long time; however there were also instances when this meeting was hindered in the middle owing to many causes. One who loved thus a lady might give her up after some time and prefer another more attractive and pay his attentions to her. Then the forsaken lady would be in a miserable plight because her intimacy with her faithless lover was not known to the people. Therefore it was that marriage prescribed as an essential ceremony to publicize and sanction the love of two people. Thus, marrying with the knowledge of the public and living together thereafter came to be recognized as a confirmation and cementing factor of love. The society thereby ensures a certain sense of security to both the lover and his

beloved. In fact marriage or '*Thirumaṇam*' is also called by another term '*Varaithal*', which confirms this view. This term means "confirming for oneself". Thus marriage is a ceremony wherein an individual in society qualified to be claimed by all. Those who were not particularly claimed thus in wedlock belonged to all; they were the prostitutes, called '*varaivil maklir*'. The term '*Thirumaṇam*' is a beautiful one to refer to marriage, containing a world of meanings; So long as man and a woman live separately without love, they are self-centered and do not learn to think of others. Once they fall in love with each other, they learn the virtue of selflessness; they begin living for each other and when they get married and bear children, they live more for the sake of their children than for themselves. Thus man learns to grow in selflessness first thinking of his wife, then of his sons and daughters, then of his family in general and finally of the society where all families live. Thus the husband and wife learn to negate themselves and live for others entirely. When they live such selfless lives, reputation seeks them; and reputation or good name is the very essence of life. It is their reputation that is imagined as the element that imparts fragrance to life and makes it lovable and enchanting as flower. Thus marriage which is the first step towards gaining this reputation or "fragrance of life" has been most aptly and beautifully called "*Thirumaṇam*" in Tamil. Of course '*maṇam*' also means union but his meaning is not popularly known as fragrance. The prefix '*thiru*' means "that which elicits the love of one who sees it". The married life of an individual should be such as to elicit the praise of all. The choice of the word '*Thirumanam*' to refer to

marriage is indeed beyond all praise. Tholkāppiyar calls the same married life as ‘*kaṟpu*’.

‘*Kaṟpu*’ or the virtue of chastity is confirmed only by married life. The ancient Tamils know very well that this would become a rare virtue in a society devoid of the rites of marriage. Therefore marriage itself came to be identified with ‘*kaṟpu*’ or ‘chastity’ or called as such.

Tholkāppiyar says that ‘*kaṟpu*’ is the offer of the lady love to the lover for the marriage by those who have the rights to offer, in the proper way according to rites (142(189)).

According to Nacchinārkiniyar, these Vedic rites mean the rites conducted by priests in the presence of the God of Fire as a witness; they would not be applicable to the Tamil ways of life at the time of Tholkāppiyar. It is usual for both the parties of the bride and the bridegroom to meet in the bride’s house some time before the marriage and confirm the alliance in writing; a *ōlai*’ i.e. ‘the letter of marriage’ or ‘*niccayathārtham*’ i.e. confirmation of marriage or *veṟṟilai pākku māṟṟuthal* i.e. the exchange of betel leaves and nuts among the parties concerned etc. Therefore there is nothing wrong in assuming that in olden days the lover married his beloved with the confirmation of his love in writing. The marriage rites mentioned are as follows:

“It is an auspicious full-moon day. The arrangements for the marriage are being made since early morning. There is a huge *pandal* before the house. Fresh sand is strewn on the ground, garlands are hung, and lamps are lighted. Cooked rice and black gram *kali* (something like pudding) are kept in abundance to feed the

guests. The house is full of all kinds of noise. The old women stand in a row carrying new vessels on their heads. Then four mothers (whose husbands are alive) come forward, carry the vessels, fill them with water and then bathe the bride with it. The ware is mingled with paddy and flowers. While pouring the water on the bride's head, the four mothers say: "May you never swerve from chastity (*karpu*); May you help your husband in carrying out all good deeds and thus may outlive as his partner loved by him for ever". This is all the marriage ceremony. Then they lead the bride into the house with great jubilee. Then the near relations of the bride offer her to the bridegroom blessing her thus; "May you become the reputed partner of him". That very night they both meet in a house for union. The bride lies down covering herself entirely with the new bridal clothes. The husband removes the veil on her face; she is nervous and sighs deeply. Thereupon the husband asks her to speak out her mind boldly. When he thus softly questions her, standing behind her, she is filled with joy and bows her head down in modesty or bashfulness" (428).

This picturesque description gives us some idea of the rites of marriage as observed by ancient Tamils. There is no mention of either fire or priests here. Those who blessed the bride were the mothers who had begotten children. Widows and maids were not qualified to bless the bride.

'*Ūdanbōkku*' is known that how the lover would separate the beloved from her people and take her away in her parents are against him is nothing but elopement. This is rather rare in our country though it is little more common in other countries today. It is not permissible according to law also if a girl who is a major goes away

with a grown-up man as her lover. As the elopement takes place only with the will and consent of the lady-in-love, it does not come under *Rakshasa* form of marriage. The hero who thus elopes with the heroine may be shown as marrying her without the knowledge of the proper persons who should offer her in marriage to him (143(189).

There were no distinctions of caste or creed among the ancient Tamils observed in marriage rites. The question of such distinctions neither does nor rises, as there were no casters at all. How could they have adopted distinctions of *varṇa*? When these distinctions were later introduced in Tamil land, different customs were adopted to suit the *varṇa* and caste. It was only then that the verse 144 '*Porul*' was also interpolated in Tholkāppiyam to confirm the distinctions and the pertaining rites.

The classification of the four *varṇas*, the consideration of the first three kinds as being superior to the last, and one of the *varṇas* being considered as the lowest were all alien to the Tamils who lived at the time of Tholkāppiyar. Therefore it is clear that this passage was introduced after the popularization and adoption of *varṇas* in Tamil Nadu. '*Varṇa*' is said to be as that there was a time when the rites applicable to the three groups of higher beings were owned by the group of the lower ones also. This statement indirectly point out the absence is one of the remorseful complaint that looks as though one of the lower *varṇa* bemoans the loss of ancient glories of the people; it does not sound like grammatical dictum, as the other passages of Tholkāppiyar. If Tholkāppiyar himself would have written these lines, he would have clearly shown of the '*melōr*' and that of the '*kilōr*' and distinguished them. Therefore this passage is beyond doubt an interpolation and should be treated as such.

Next, the poet proceeds to show why the rites of marriage came to be adopted. They are necessary, as we have already seen, to protect the interests of the lady against the deceitful ways of men in general. That is why the ancient Tamil scholars and wise men prescribed wedlock to avoid lies and deceit and the lover and his beloved were enjoyed to get married in the presence of the public. Tholkāppiyar says in this connection as follows:

Poyyum valuvum thōṇṇiya pinnar

Aiyar yāththnar karaṇam enba (145(189).

(It is said that after falsehood and failure appeared (in the conduct of love) the leaders of the society caused ceremony to be held)

Naccinārkkiniyar interprets the “*enba*”. He interprets the term in the light of Aryan tradition based on Sanskrit work. He says that “*enba*” does not refer to the first writers or predecessors but the authors of northern books i.e. Sanskrit books. This assumption itself is entirely wrong. As *Panamparanār* puts it in his ‘*pāyiram*’ (Introductory verse), Tholkāppiyar indicates by ‘*enba*’ that he is mentioning the fact with absolute conviction which is based on the authority sanctioned by the learned predecessors of him in Tamil land, whose works he has thoroughly mastered. He means by ‘*enba*’ only those who inhabited the region between the Northern ‘*Vēnkadam*’ range of hills and Southern Cape of Kumari. He suggests that his statement carries weight and that it is irrefutable because it is the result of thought understanding of the writers who lived before him in Tamil land, and of the grammar of the language. He never thought of the *Aryans* at all or the northern race of the

language. In that case, he would have mentioned them beyond doubt. Thus the terms ‘*enba*’, ‘*enbar*’ etc., only denote the predecessors of the poet in Tamil Nadu.

He interprets the second line thus; the term *aiyar* used is a caste, Tamil term. It means “leader, or eminent ones, or men of unique glory”. The term *aiya* is a form of address which is derived from *aiyar*. The *Brāhmins* who found the old and respectable men in Tamil Nadu addressed as *aiyar*, assumed the term themselves. The Christian missionary who came here from Europe call himself *aiyar* and *Sāstri* imitating the *Brāhmins* of Tamil Nadu. Thereof it is clear that the term *aiyar* used here does not denote the *Brāhmin* only.

It is important to examine the import of the passage quoted above. Centuries before Tholkāppiyar, lovers might live together as husband and wife without either observing the rites of marriage or written confirmation of marriage. In course of time, when deceitful loves and faithlessness appeared, the eminent ones laid down that love should be consummated and solemnized by means of marriage rites.

Next, we find that Tholkāppiyar shows a remarkable analytical sense and aesthetic taste in classifying the suitability of the various expressions by the various persons in various contexts or places. Indeed this analysis, so grand and so detailed, is splendid in its appeal to us. The literary conventions he lays down reveal the tremendous psychological insight of the author who clearly understands the subtle variations of moods and temperament. Various expressions such as *thōli*, *Kāmakilaththiyār* or mistresses, *sevili* or foster-mother, actors, songsters (*pānar*) and *Ilaiyar*, (servants) we understand the routine of the domestic or family life in ancient

Tamil land, and the ancient civilization of the Tamils. It was usual for the hero to marry a second time and also to enjoy union with mistresses and prostitutes (*Irparaththai* and *Seripparaththai*).

The virtuous qualities of the heroine, as summarized by the female companion and other servants by way of introducing her to the hero are indeed worth cherishing even today in any housewife. Chastity, love, moral, goodness, patience or fortitude mixed with mercy (kindness), ability for concentration (or observance of the mental discipline) hospitality shown in prompt attentions paid to guests and generosity shown in treating the relations with kindness are said to be the typical qualities of the housewife (152(196)). These are of course virtues of lasting value, loved at all times. It is but natural for the *thōli* and others to praise the heroine in the presence of the hero. His good opinion regarding the heroine is confirmed by what the others say, and he is full of joy.

Man is rarely satisfied with one virtuous woman and there need be no feeling of shame at the thought of the existence of prostitutes in ancient Tamil land. It must be noted that prostitution did not exist here licensed by the government as in certain other countries. It was not considered as a source of income for government. This aspect of prostitution was just treated as a literary device to enhance the charm of variance assumed by the heroine in the *thiṇai* of *marutham*; actually only the rulers, the warriors, and the wealthy in society were running after prostitutes. Thus it must be noted that generally those who formed the bulk of the society must have been actually loyal and faithful to their wives.

If a hero happens to go away from his home in search of prostitutes, the time when he should return is pointed out by Tholkāppiyar. This shows that the ancients had a scientific knowledge of matters dealing with sex-urge. It was a time when birth-control was unknown; it was considered a great bliss “to increase and multiply”. The hero is asked to be in union with the heroine at the time when the ovum is released, ready for impregnation. This period is said to be the twelve days after the duration of the menstruations. Modern Sexologists also are of the same view. Mary Stopes says that the ovum is released from the tenth to the twelfth day after the period of menstruations. Thus the ancient Tamils had also advanced much in the field of sex as well. The husband is enjoined not to go of sex as well. The husband is enjoined not to be away from his wife on these fruitful days:

Pūppin puṟappadu iṟāru ṇaḷum

Niththakanṟu uṟaiyār enmanār pulavar (187(201)

(When he is away from the wife for having intimacy with the paramour, he must not live without his wife for the twelve days after the menstruation- say the poets.)

This passage indirectly helps one to avoid the “days of fertilization of the ovum”, when family planning is the order of the day. Tholkāppiyar reveals profound scholarship in this field of physiology as well. Next, separation might be caused because of the higher education. He lays down the period of absence for purposes of education and shows when the husband should return to his wife. This passage enables us to visualize the condition of educational facilities available in those days. This line,

“Vēṇḍiya kalvi yāṇdu mūnriṇavāthu”(188(201)

shows the duration of higher education does not exceed three years. It looks as though that the subject of education has divided into generally education and special or higher education even in those days. General education means the learning of simple arithmetic and alphabet necessary for all. Special education means any branch of technical study preparing for an occupation. The poet lays down that the husband may be away from his wife for a period of three years for that until the time of marriage, it was usual for a person to receive general education in his own place. When he is said to go away from home for study, it must be for the purpose of special education.

Today the professional courses of education like Medicine, Engineering or Linguistics last for a period of 5 to 6 years. However, the working days of the year amount to just a little more than six months. Thus the six years of study in professional course amounts three years of continuous instruction of olden days. The marriageable age for a man is 16 years, as pointed out by commentators. Thus up to 16 or 18 years the youth would remain in their native places, receiving general education and after marriage, some of them perhaps would go to place for receiving special education.

Education was considered compulsory for all in those days; all should not only acquire knowledge but also live strictly in accordance with the precepts of knowledge. There should be thus a harmony between what is acquired and what is practiced. There was no divergence between knowledge and practice in the case of

scholars, as we often find today. Education was honored and cherished as the very eye of a person.

Naccinārkkiniyar's meaning of the passage does not seem apt in this context. “*kalvi yāndu mūnru iṣavāthu*”: The courses of education like the *Vedānta* and so on dealing with asceticism (*Thuravaram*) would not go beyond the required number of years. *Mūnru iṣavāthu*: All such courses of education would not go beyond the three *pādam*. Then he continues to explain the meaning as follows:

The term *iṣavāthu* is to be taken in both contexts. The three *pādams* are the branches of knowledge that show ‘Thou art that’. They are the Absolute (*Param*), Should and the realization of the complete synthesis of the two. That is, the study of the *Agamas* which impart knowledge of the matter (*Poruḷ*) that is beyond all the philosophic principles involved in the three *pādams*. The poet has prescribed this knowledge for all the people of the three *varṇās*. The rest of the *vēlālars* also are mean in so far as they can study only the *Agamas* and their translation in Tamil.

There is no time limit fixed for this period of learning as those leading to domestic (family) lives to be prepared for a life of complete ascetics. There is no connection whatsoever between this interpretation or explanation and the signal passage of Tholkāppiyar. First the commentator mentions “the required number of years”; then while explaining he says that there is no time-limit to be fixed. Again as the terms “required education” clearly indicate the requisite standard of literacy, how does he conclude that they mean the study of *Vedānta* and so on?” (Pillai, 428). Were the people who lived at the time of Tholkāppiyar conversant with the *Vedāntas* or the

Upanishads? Even if they tried to do so were they permitted to do so by those who professed Vedic, orthodox religion? When Naccinārkkiniyar refers to the branches of knowledge prescribed for the three *varṇās* does he not suggest that the velalars enjoyed no such rights to learn and that they were denied the opportunities of education?

It is clear that Tholkāppiyar composed his poem in Tamil, to serve the purposes of Tamil Scholars and to bring out the glories of Tamil tradition. He would not have composed it to publicize the ailment distinctions of *varṇās*, quite unknown to the people of his day. What Naccinārkkiniyar does is a clear example of what should be strictly avoided by commentators who are not expected to introduce all extraneous and irrelevant details they know in their interpretation of the original. They should strictly be guided by the sanction and authority of the original and confine themselves to what author lets them know.

In *Ahaththiṇai iyal* another passage is also irrelevantly explained by the same commentator. *Uyarṇḍhōrk kuriya oththin āna*. The terms *ōththin ana* are interpreted thus: “The Sanskrit and Tamil works born of the *Vēdas*”. *Uyarṇḍhōrkuriya*: those which are suited to the *Brahmins*, kings, merchants and the high-born *vēlalas*. Here the term *ōththu* is taken to mean the Vedas. *ōththu* is a Tamil term which means the books of research or higher learning. This meaning of the term is confirmed by its use in Kural:

Maṟappinum ōththuk koḷākum P ārppān

Piṟappu oḷukkam kuṇṟakkedum. – (134)

(A research scholar, though he forgets, may recover it, but if he fails in good conduct worthy of human being, he is destroyed).

“The book of research” means the specialization of study in some branch of knowledge, more or less like the research course today undertaken by scholars after finishing the Post-Graduate course in a subject. Those who are suited to do research in any field of knowledge may well be called the eminent –ones (*Ūyarndhōr*), and they are head and shoulders above others in acquisition of knowledge. Even today only those who distinguish themselves in their study are allowed to do research. Similar was the custom in olden days. Research is not suited to all but only to the deserving few, the eminent ones (*Ūyarndhōr*), who distinguish themselves in knowledge. This is the only possible and straight forward interpretation of the passage given.

Thus, we find there were three branches of education like general education, technical education and research at the time of Tholkāppiyar. These three branches were open to all irrespective of any consideration except an aptitude and taste for learning. There was no question of distinctions of *varṇās* as it were not established then; nor was there need to prescribe a particular branch of study for a particular *varṇā*.

The line “*Vēndhuṟu tholilē yāṇḍinathu ahamē*” shows that it was usual for some men to leave their land for serving in other countries on political purposes. Such people should not be away from their wives for more than a year, says the poet. The stability of the government and the conduct of the subjects speak volumes for the

political wisdom of the ancient people in Tamil land. The other line “*ēnaippirivum* etc,” shows that the separation caused by purposes of earning material wealth should not also exceed the period of a year. As separations caused by purposes of ambassadorship also come under separation for political purposes, it must also rightly come under “services rendered to the king”.

It is usual today for men and women in all walks of life to go on excursions and picnic. We love to relax ourselves by whiling away the time in parks surrounded by fascinating natural scenery. Some may think that this recreation to give us relief from humdrum existence derived from the conduct with the Europeans or the Westerners. They may not know that such recreations as going on picnics or excursions were popular even during the time of Tholkāppiyar. The poet says that the husband and wife whiled away their time in parks and other beautiful spots.

Yāṟum kuḷanum kāvum adip

Pathiyikandhu nukarthalum uriya enba”.(191(201)

(It is said that the enjoyment in sports and games pertaining to the river, tank and park outside the town – limit is due to them.)

The term ‘*kā*’ means a flower-garden like the park of today. Those who are in service today get a day off in the week but yet they do not have the facilities provided for them to spend their time in happy surrounding, most of them cannot afford to go on picnics or excursions even to the many spots of beauty. It is said that in foreign countries, the government itself provides some facilities in this regard. Similar facilities are quite essential in our country also. Industry, of course, is good and

fruitful; leisure also is essential to make industry more fruitful than it is today. Industry without leisure would become too much of a burden and drudgery. Recreations go a long much of a burden and drudgery. Recreations go a long way in refreshing the mind and enduring it with a new vigor to launch upon the work more efficiently.

Another interesting feature of lie in ancient Tamil land is that the people of those days looked upon the whole course of life of an individual as one continuous course of mingled obligations, duties and pleasure. Thus, learning is a life-long process with them. It continues even after marriage. When the proper time comes, the youth marries the beloved and for leading the domestic life with her, he has to carry out the duties and obligations of a householder (*illaṟṟhthān*). The *Brahmacharya* period is a long period of bachelorhood and the *Sanyasa* period which is the period of asceticism after forsaking the household entirely foreign to the Tamil codes of life. The young man while experiencing love first marries the beloved and then lives with her for ever, bearing children and blessed by their relations and the guests; he thus carried out his obligations to society and does his duty remaining as a householder. He never cuts himself away from his wife and children and the society to which he belongs, bothering about why he is born and contemplating on the cause thereof. On the other hand he is concerned with the particular obligations and duties that devolves on him first as a householder, and then as a individual in society, and thus he tries to do his best, understating the purpose of life, if not the cause of life, perfectly well. Similarly he never worries why a person dies; he is concerned with the purpose

for which a man dies. Thus the ancient Tamils tried to make the best of life, seeking various ways and means. They learn the art of living well and they questioned only the purpose of life. What is it? It is nothing but doing what is noble or glorious or what is good to all.

Tholkāppiyar says:

Kāmam cāṇṇa kadaikkōḷ kālai

Emam cāṇṇa makkaḷodu thuvaṛli

Aṟamburi cuṟṟamodu kiḷavanum kiḷathiym

Ciṟandhathu paiṟṟal iṟandhthan payanē . (192(201)

(After the enjoyment of love is fulfilled, being surrounded by the pleasure-giving children and having the various virtuous relatives with them, the husband and wife must perform what is best for the world and die for it; this is the way of reaping benefit of this life.)

Naccinārkkiniyar has unfortunately paraded his love and knowledge of Sanskrit works and northern traditions in interpreting many such passages of Tholkāppiyam. Tholkāppiyar has thus made the Tamil codes of life, what the future generations too have to understand, analyse, and follow the virtues for the upcoming generations correlating ‘the past exist in the present the present modifies to the future’. Since because of the traces of influence of Sanskrit in Tholkāppiyam it paves way fit for the comparative study with T.S.Eliot who has *Vēdanta Upanishad* principles of look into life and literature and attempts to represent the truth with their

own way of understanding and incorporates it by examining without any bias or prejudice in coining their characters.

Eliot has always been considered among the spiritual writers of the modern world, who are concerned with the problems of salvation. Most of his works reveal his religious conviction. All his poetic dramas belong to this category. According to Neville Coghill, Murder in the Cathedral is about a situation and a quality of life; the situation is perpetual and the quality is rare (MC 10).

Thomas Becket in Murder in the Cathedral was educated in London and Paris and became a personal friend and confidant of Henry II, King of England, who appointed Thomas to the high office of the Lord Chancellor of England; Later Henry II was involved in a battle with the clergy over the question of whether the king had legal authority over the clergy. He appointed Thomas as the Archbishop of Canterbury as he was sure that Thomas would continue his loyalty to the king. Thomas accepted the post reluctantly. And, when Thomas became Archbishop, he opposed the King's measures against the special privileges of the clergy. The struggle between Henry and Thomas finally led to the later being forced into exile, and he lived in Europe for seven years. Following reconciliation with the king Thomas returned to England but the peace was of short duration. Becket ex-communicated certain Bishops who had officiated at the crowning of Prince Henry. This so enraged the king that he wished that somebody would so away with Becket. Four of his spiritual knights took the hint and went in search of the priest.

The four knights in the play Murder in the Cathedral are shown as the agents of the king. They themselves do not know that they are the agents of the will of god.

The four Knights play a dual role. In the first phase, they are the agents of Henry I and come to Canterbury to execute the King's historical order addressed to 'those who eat my bread and drink my wine to rid him of his troublesome priest'. On the second phase, the play emphasizes the contemporary significance of Thomas' martyrdom.

Eliot himself has a sense of literary tradition which influences his plays. Speaking about his sense of tradition Eliot in his essay 'On Tradition' writes,

Tradition is not solely, or even primarily, the maintenance of certain dogmatic beliefs; these beliefs have come to take their living form in the course of the formation of a Tradition. What I mean by tradition involves all those habitual actions, habits and customs from the most significant religious rite to our conventional way of greeting a stranger, which represent the blood kinship of the same people living in the same place. (SP 20).

It can be explained that a sense of tradition is essential, for it makes us realize our kinship with the people living in the same place with us. Tradition is not something immovable but it is something constantly growing and changing. Eliot distinguishes between the essential and the inessential, the good and the bad in a particular tradition and says that the good and the essential must be followed and revived. Eliot in his seminal essay on 'Tradition and the Individual talent' says that tradition is not a dead one; it continues and lives in the present. When a really great work of art is reduced, this tradition can be modified only to some extent and the artist too has a sense of literary tradition. The saint is an artist who obeys the tradition of daily crucifixion and of ultimate martyrdom.

The play Murder in the Cathedral reflects this sense of tradition in its form and content. First speaking of the form, the play begins with the Chorus. Eliot, in this traditional sense, adopts the chorus in the plays. His attention has been focused on the central theme of martyrdom. He begins the play like the Greek plays at a comparatively late stage in the career of Becket. Incidents regarding historical events which preceded martyrdom have not been enacted on the stage but are imparted through the device of narration. Eliot does not disturb the unity of time. As in a Greek tragedy he makes the audience feel that the catastrophe is imminent. Like a Greek play, Murder in the Cathedral is religious and moral in tone. With the theme of martyrdom and with its ritual pattern, the play has strong religious emotions. Like the Chorus in a Greek play it provides information about events which happened off the stage and comments on character and action. It helps the audience to understand the play.

As in a classical drama in Murder in the Cathedral, Eliot has used a minimum number of characters. Attention is concentrated on Becket and the others merely symbolic; they are not individualized. That is why they are not given any names. They are known as 'messenger', 'tempters' etc.

Eliot presents the Chorus as a vision of horror. The women of Canterbury turn to the comfort of Christ's sacrifice about to be renewed in the martyrdom of Thomas. By the end of the play Eliot takes us to an understanding of the significance of Thomas' death. He makes us experience the moment of 'grief in joy' and 'joy in grief'. Thus Eliot uses the Chorus to provide both the background and the counterpoint to the action to be maintained.

Thus the Chorus, the representatives of ordinary humanity, is involved in the suffering. They are aware from the very beginning that they are being drawn into the events which disturb the daily routine of their lives. They do not wish anything to draw them out of 'the daily round and common task'. They want to 'go on living and partly living'. However they soon become conscious that the coming of the knights, symbols of evil, is a pollution of all life and nature. They feel that they themselves are involved in the imminent death of Thomas and their greatest need is for an utter purging of themselves and the world.

After the lamentation of the Chorus and the priest's failure to persuade Thomas to seek safety by turning the sanctuary into a fortress, the Knights make a brief second visit 'slightly tipsy', and singing a parody of hymn. They order Thomas to submit to the will of the king, and when Thomas refuses to do so, they murder him then and there.

The second aspect of the play is its literary structure. Eliot has constructed the play according to his earlier ideas of perfect structural organization. In *Murder in the Cathedral* he achieves an overall unity. The play is unified by the movement of fear and the 'will' is expressed at first by the Chorus and at last it mourns and rejoices at the full meaning of Becket's martyrdom. The interlude is an integral part of the play's total structure since it dramatizes Becket's attempt which turns out ultimately to be a successful one. According to Nevill Coghill the play is richly documented; but all the documents issue from the supporters of Becket. Nevill Coghill adds in his introduction that Eliot has treated their

Evidence faithfully but selectively, to give form and concentration of art to the natural hubbub of murder; almost everything in his dialogue has its

basis in one or other account so that what he has written is imagined, not invented... (MC 10)

The speeches of the four knights are seen as an expression of the worldly evaluation martyrdom, of Becket spiritual evolution. The acceptance by the Chorus of Becket's explanation is the end of the play.

As for the versification, Eliot forms the rhythm of regular blank verse which has become too remote from the movement of the modern speech. Therefore what he kept in mind was the versification of *Everyman*, 'An avoidance of too much of iambic, some use of alliteration, and occasional and unexpected rhyme, helped to distinguish the versification from that of the 19th century. Further *Everyman* states that 'its versification is extremely irregular, at least in comparison with that of the earlier *Miracle* and *morality Plays*, which, nevertheless, it partly imitates' (145). Nevill Coghill states that 'the lines are of varying length and have a varying number of stresses, there is a good deal of rhyme and there are touches of alliteration' (145) in this play. In fine, the versifying technique Eliot adopts in this play is quite suited not only to the theme it handles but also to the unity of its structure.

As a playwright Eliot has significant achievements. *Murder in the Cathedral* is a full length drama. In this, Eliot is confronted with the problem of dramatic form and his patience in it for the first time.

Eliot starts with the general assumption even before the beginning of his career as a dramatist that any form, which is perfected by the writers of one age, cannot be copied exactly by the writers of another age' in "The Listener". It belongs to its own period. He believes that a form is not merely 'such and such a pattern, but a precise way

of thinking and feeling' (SW 63). According to Eliot, any form before it is applied to this purpose, must have the potential 'to arrest, so to speak, the flow of spirit at any particular point' (SE 111). As to the possibility of having suggestive models from the past, Eliot holds the view that one must go back to such plays as *Everyman*, medieval moralities and mystery plays, or the plays written by the Greek dramatists.

Virtually, Eliot has followed the same practice in his play *Murder in the Cathedral*. This practice is comparatively closer and more diversified. The very design of the play is enough to establish its affinity with the classical models of tragedy. Considering the types of references, the play abounds in the liturgy of the church which the choruses resemble, the mystery and miracle plays of the medieval age; the Morality play with its Temptations and the Biblical style age; the Morality play with its Temptations and the Biblical style in general. Finally Eliot endeavours to present the history and tradition of Becket, which, notwithstanding the other aspects of the play, prepares the audience for identifying themselves with the higher ideal, underlying Becket's martyrdom. The play, in this sense, becomes rooted both in our time and in Becket's time.

Eliot's characteristic achievement is the dramatic power of its verse. The play has gained the qualities of unprecedented unity and intensity. *Murder in the Cathedral* embodies all the constituents of a dramatic language, about which Eliot has been terrorizing since long. The verse of the Choruses is a great success. It is, perhaps, the greatest thing in a great play. The following lines of *Murder in the Cathedral* show the new kind of dramatic movement of its language.

O Thomas return, Archbishop return; return to France return, quickly,
quietly, leave us to perish in quiet. You come with applause, you come
with rejoicing, but you come bringing death into Canterbury a doom on
the house, a doom on yourself, a doom on the world (243)

Or

No! Shall I, who keep the keys of heaven and hell, supreme alone in
England ho bind and loose, with power from the (Pope, descend to desire
a punier power? delegate to deal the doom of damnation" (249).

Eliot makes alternative emphasis much faster and displays a more scientific attitude towards the aural effects of the rhythmic beats, and everything he maintains is remarkable.

Eliot's theory of 'Objective Correlative' occupies an important place in the creative process of Eliot's poetry both dramatic and non-dramatic. One should not forget that Eliot always stood for an impersonal art. According to him, a poet must transmute his personal agonies into something rich, strange and universal. Naturally this process of transmutation demanded its own method. "The manipulation of an appropriate form provides to the poet a way to give order and meaning to raw experience, it cannot remain isolated from his view of life and reality" in mentioned in "The Dial". Thus form and content become well fused together, in it Eliot wants to give form to experience and to create an artistic order out of the chaos of emotions' (SW 55).

And so, Eliot chose the death and martyrdom of Thomas-a-Becket, the Archbishop of Canterbury, as the theme of his play Murder in the Cathedral. Though in Murder in the cathedral, the subject is historical, the drama is about the conflict between

the material and the spiritual worlds and about the historical situation as narrated by the three priests to the Chorus in the opening scene. Becket's struggle within is given as a series of encounters with the tempters and with the priests. It is the focal point of the play. Eliot dramatizes through Becket the meaning of sainthood and martyrdom to the ordinary men and woman of today. The conflict between the Church and the state is a recurrent theme in English plays. Nevill Coghill, states that the position of Becket 'is the centre-that at the circumference, acting, he at the still centre, patient, suffering, witnessing, willing'(17). Eliot shows the need for the human role in sainthood which is a life of 'willing harmony with the will at the still centre of things' (20). Becket's discussion of martyrdom is also his explanation of the peace of the Christ, that peace the world cannot give.

The central theme of the play is martyrdom. In this play, Eliot has used the term 'martyrdom' in its original sense. The word 'martyr' means 'witness'. It is 'not for the glory of becoming a saint, but for the sake of uniting his will with the will of Love that moves the stars'(18). Eliot presents Thomas as returning to Canterbury where he finds no reconciliation with the king. The Choruses feel a sense of impending disaster. Then comes the crucial scene in which Thomas struggles with the temptations within him. D.E.Jones says that,

In the days following his return, which he knows must come, temptations throng his mind. Temptations of the past revive, the appeal to the senses (partly indulged in, in his days of worldly prosperity,) the lure of temporal power such as he had wielded during his Chancellorship, the prospect of beating Henry at his political game by accepting the proffered alliance

with the discontented Barons-these are temptations which he has known before. But the fourth temptations is unexpected, that is the temptation, 'to do the right deed for the wrong reason'(Jones 70)

is to become a martyr for the glory of being one. In this agony, Thomas acknowledges the spiritual pride within him and humbles his will, emerging with the hard-won knowledge that, as he says in the sermon, 'the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, and who no longer desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr' (MC 57).

In this way Thomas realizes through the Fourth tempter that he has been thinking of martyrdom as a glory, which exalts one above all on the earth and his realization gives him the final victory in the struggle with Henry. The fourth Tempter flings his own words back at him.

They know and do not know, what it is to (act or suffer, they know and do not know, that action is suffering and suffering is action. Neither does the agent suffer nor the patient act. But both are fixed, In an eternal action, an eternal patience. (49)

In losing his will in the will of God, Becket achieves the reconciliation. In it, Thomas discovers the force of the ultimate law of the spirit and the reality of Divine Love. In his sermon, Becket states that 'Christian martyrdom is never an accident, for saints are not made by accident' (57). In Murder in the Cathedral, Martyrdom takes place in a ritual form. Becket's is an act of obedience to the will of god. To loose one's will in the will of God is, as we have seen, to realize the eternal pattern in the flux of time:

To apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint' (57)

Thomas gives his life in such a spirit and accepts death. Thomas' share in the pattern of action and suffering draws to a completion. 'Every martyr is a witness' and he signifies to the efficacy of Christ's sacrifice a gesture of love in response to Divine Love is revealed in Christ.

His blood given to buy my life.
his blood given to buy my life,
my blood given to pay for his death
my death for his death(30).

And thus, Thomas fulfils his part in the 'eternal design'. To say it precisely, Thomas is a type of Christ who sees that for him to die is more important in the eternal dimension than to accept the reasonable arguments both of his tempters and the priest. Eliot sees Becket's martyrdom as an action out of time, an action which has its full significance in a timeless dimension, where every deed is seen to have eternal significance or external insignificance.

A Christ is crucified in every age, so that the mass of men may be roused out of their spiritual apathy and complacency; the son of man is crucified always 'wherever a saint has doubt, wherever a martyr is giving his blood for the blood of Christ. And so Eliot's theme of martyrdom is futile, if it fails to remind ordinary men and women of God's love. It is with the blood of martyrs that spiritual fertility is restored to the spiritual wasteland.

D.E. Jones says of 'True Martyrdom' that it 'requires the fulfillment of the two halves of a pattern' (74). The first half is fulfillment by the martyr himself. Thomas has accepted the martyrdom in the right spirit. In *Murder in the Cathedral* spiritual examination of the nature of martyrdom is set against the background not only of the 12th, but also of the 20th century.

We can analyse this dramatization of the martyrdom of Thomas Becket, in two different planes. At the ordinary level, it presents two significant aspects of the historical situation. In the first place, it displays a psychological study of the saint, and secondly, it shows a struggle for power between the Church and the state. And at a deeper level, the play becomes the Christian drama of 'fall and regeneration' in which atonement is symbolized by Becket. Eliot, himself attains the state of the impersonal in creating Becket. As a martyr, he belongs to the class of Christ who also suffered temptation before entering upon the drama of action and suffering. The tempters may be regarded as the whispering adversaries, the Women of Canterbury are the fallen Adam; and the knights are the lawful heirs of Satan. Thomas Becket, like Christ, is tested, slain and exalted, not for his sake but for the fate of other men.

Drawing centrally from the prose sermon and Thomas' role as a saintly imitator of Christ, Eliot focuses on martyrdom and part of the play imposes a larger pattern on individual actions. The knights and Thomas are contrasted thoroughly here. The scene reflects Eliot's apprehension of human history. Eliot opposes it with Thomas' life by asserting that the value on a note of man's fate with the image of the turning wheel.

But in the life of one man, never

the same time returns, Server

the Cord, shed the scale, only
the fool, fixed in his folly, may think
He can return the wheel on which he turns (248)

Thomas refers to the agent and the patient being fixed in an eternal action, he proposes a pattern which embraces both 'eternal burden' and 'perpetual glory'. By the Eliot interweaves suffering, striving and acceptance and makes a strong note of his conception of the relation of the individual to the society. In his 'The Idea of a Christian Society' Eliot refers to the view that society is for the salvation of the individual and the individual must be sacrificed to the society.

It (the church) wants everybody, and it wants each individual as a whole.
It must therefore struggle for a condition of society which will give the maximum of opportunity for us to lead wholly Christian lives... it maintains the paradox that while we are each responsible for our own souls, we are all responsible for all the other souls. (SE 13)

In this process, a sense of permanence and eternal recurrence is caught sight of in the midst of flux. The image of the still point and the turning wheel thus seems to be an embodiment of the structure of the play.

Eliot uses the characters themselves as a device for the action to voice their inner thoughts. Becket gave his life 'to the Law of Man' and consequently became impersonal leaving his person behind. Eliot dramatizes Becket's innermost temptation through the Tempters in which the proud mind becomes humble and chooses the martyr's crown as its reward. The last temptation is the greatest reason; 'To do the right deed for the wrong reason'. Becket wins through to the recognition that no man can will his way to

martyrdom, 'I shall no longer act or suffer to the sword's end' Murder in the Cathedral (53) concluded Becket and submits his will to the will of God.

Technically, Eliot used the Chorus to impersonate a definite group of people. It existed 'in' the play and not as an impersonal voice. Dramatically, the Chorus serves many purposes. It works as a mouthpiece of the dramatist, Eliot. It expounds the past; comments on the present, and illuminates the future. It provides the spectator with a counterpart of Eliot himself. It can appeal to the senses with an imposing dignity and grandeur. It presents the inside permutations of common humanity, and the capacity to portray human situation in its relevant perspective. And it is meant to promote the dramatic realization of the significance of 'martyrdom' in terms of Christian liturgy. Eliot sets himself in writing lines, not for an anonymous Chorus, but for a Chorus of women of Canterbury. He himself says that the 'Liturgy is 'unconsciously general' and 'consciously general' (Sharma 94).

Looking at the plan of action of Murder in the Cathedral one can feel that the play exists at more than one level. Eliot exploits the historical context of the death of Becket; yet he never tries to render the history of the Christian Martyrdom. Through Becket's sacrifice Eliot tries to dramatize the need for total submission to the will of god. Here Becket is moved by an inner realization and not by any eternal pressure. Eliot himself explains his decision in terms of 'action and suffering'.

The death of Becket in its formal aspect may be regarded as martyrdom. But in its substance it may imply a deeper significance, not so much terms of martyrdom as in terms of sacrifice, suggesting a general truth. In the natural and human order, man

without such a sacrifice is a mere best. It is the act of receiving bloods, which in the final analysis redeems human beings.

The motif of action in the play Murder in the Cathedral constitutes two dramatic levels- martyrdom and redemption. The ordinary member of the audience will generally interpret Becket's death as martyrdom, while the intelligent members may consider it an act of redemption.

Considering the symbolic levels, the play Murder in the Cathedral has a deeper significance. The play resembles a tragedy and presents a moral flaw and a sense of justification. It goes to the credit of Eliot's craftsmanship that, instead of conferring all aspects on the protagonist, as is usual in a tragedy, he has demonstrated them through all the characters in the play. Thus the moral law is presented through the implorations of the Tempters, the suffering of the Chorus, and the acts of the knights. The justification of the tragic act is manifested through the exaltation of the martyr, the condemnation of the murders and the salvation of the sufferers. In this sense, the knights symbolize sin, the women suffering, and Becket sacrifice. According to Theodore Spencer, the characters-the priests, the women, the knights and Becket himself- live at different levels of moral consciousness, which is the resultant outcome of the way. Each character looks at reality under divergent conditions of life. Francis Fergusson, commenting on this aspect of Murder in the Cathedral, compares the levels to the three 'orders' of Pascal-'the order of nature, the order of mind, and the order of charity' in his "The Idea of the Theatre" (210) which Eliot has elaborated in his essay 'The Pensees of Pascal' (SE 416).

There remains another level of consciousness, based on the structure of personal feelings. It gives, as Raymond William states, 'the variation of levels of consciousness

we have seen described in 'Sweeney Agonistes'- the many unconsciousness, the few conscious' (Williams 183). At the conscious level, the play shows its concern more with what happens through the 'man' than with what happens to Thomas Becket. Similarly, at the single religious level the feeling conveyed is a feeling of recognition in Christian terms, while at a purely secular level the feeling would be of a different kind. However, Eliot has succeeded in communicating the nucleus of his own feelings in a manner, which seems to be 'traditional and conventional' (183). The play, though religious in every sense of the word, has the intensity to arouse excitement even in those who are not religious. According to D.E.Jones, this intensity is the cumulative product of the ramification of meaning at all planes of awareness that man is capable of-intellectual, sensuous and spiritual (79). Thus Eliot has conveyed a definite view of life.

The statement of life which Eliot has tried to project exists at more than one level of understanding. At one plane, the play embodies a feeling of Christian recognition; it also speaks of state and the church. If an allegorical view is taken, it would suggest a conflict between 'brute power', on the one hand and 'saintliness' on the other. It appears as if the Second priest is close in spirit to the knights, just as the First Priest is akin to the women, and the third Becket himself. The Second priest is a symbol of moral strength. He may not be bad, but he is unsaintly. The Third Priest remains passive through the understanding of all the implications of the conflict. In its final analysis, the conflict indicates the church, but a church dedicated to humility, and represented by the women rather than the priests, Eliot means to communicate two feelings; first, that a church is not only the priests and secondly, that a simple and sincere involvement done

out of a sense of humility, as that of the woman of Canterbury, constitutes the Church itself.

Thus the action of the play enhances the intensity of the action. The women of Canterbury confess and consent as does Becket himself. Psychologically, the internal conflicts of Becket and the Chorus are as it were, 'microcosmic'. They present a searching study of the significance of martyrdom as symbolized by Becket. The knights are sin, while the chorus is suffering. The inner conflict is climaxed in a sin of 'counterparts' of the temptations from within through the tempters and the claims of humanity from without the priests and chorus. All through it, it explicates the personality of Eliot himself and expresses 'the great mass of the individuals' experience in an impersonal manner.

This exactly is what Eliot has tried to achieve by means of the 'objective correlative'. It has provided to him the necessary appliances to objectify his personal experiences and raise them into something impersonal and universal. And this has yielded a unique structure of thoughts and feelings, and matter and method become indivisible.

Even as the artist submits his personal will to a tradition and is thus a martyr, the protagonist Becket surrenders his will to the will of God without any motive. Thus he dies to himself and to the world as well, as he has no value even for martyrdom. What the saint achieves spontaneously, the chorus also participates in and partakes of. The chorus by vindicating Becket and by feeling for him is martyrs in the making as they instinctively obey the call of the impersonal in the person of the Archbishop. The knights, by obeying the king selflessly, are also martyrs though in the wrong

cause. They are bound to evolve into spiritual beings before long. Thus in Eliot's plays martyrdom is portrayed not as the exclusive prerogative of Bishops and archbishops only but that of even the lay characters as is evidenced in Harry in The Family Reunion.

The Family Reunion is the drawing-room of naturalism. It displays an uneven combination of formalism and realism. The persons in the play include several 'everyday insignificant characters'. These elements represent framework rather than structure. And thus, Eliot opts for 'the details of contemporary life with characters selected from the commonplace situation' is depicted in "On Poetry and Poets" (SP 81) and the characters touch nearer to the contemporary speech.

Eliot formulates the plot of The Family Reunion in a simple manner. To put it in a nutshell, Harry had left his home seven years ago, and he returns to participate in his mother, Amy's birthday party. In the meantime, he has lost his wife while traveling on a ship. And he does not understand how it happened. He has only a kind of feeling that he either pushed her or saw her slipping to drown. Since then Harry feels a sense of responsibility for the death of his wife. The mother looks forward to Harry's return with the hope that he may settle down in his ancestral house. However, the son decides to become a missionary, and leaves for a foreign country. This decision causes great disappointment to his mother and she dies.

The play is situated around a family birthday party and all the characters are not fully assembled to celebrate the party of Amy in the beginning. Amy had been at Wishwood for nearly forty years. To her, her marriage was not fruitful. "It has been a loveless marriage, entered into for what, no doubt, had been considered good sound

family reasons at that time but it bred unhappiness and evil". (F.R.23). Anyhow the bliss of love had come to them on 'the dark wings of renunciation' (24). Harry was born and the unwilling father, on whom she had forced this son, was already planning to murder his wife but in vain. Eliot portrays a man's wish to murder his woman as follows:

I knew a man did a girl in
Any man might to do a girl in
Any man has to, needs to, wants to
Once in a lifetime, to do a girl in.(19).

Agatha, the youngest sister of Amy had her own greatness as she had loved Harry's father and restrained him from the foolish fantasies of murdering Amy, his wife. Agatha always thought of Harry and his close affinity to Agatha is such that Agatha's love for Harry's father got spiritually transferred to Harry.

After John's and Arthur's birth, their father who was living a 'life-in death' with uncommitted murder in his heart leaves them in the darkness. In the meantime, having renounced her love, Agatha accepts spinsterhood. Amy's thoughts are for a better future and so she decides to get Harry married. Amy chooses Mary, who falls quietly and permanently in love with Harry as any normal human being does.

Harry rises to manhood and as a result he decides to marry according to his own personal will and this decision makes it clear that he has chosen a wife of the wife of the kind that would cut him adrift from Wishwood; Amy diagnoses the motive of her son's ill-chosen wife.

She never wished to be one of the family,
She only wanted to keep him to herself
To satisfy her vanity. (75)

Harry's marriage is as fruitless as his father's. His history seems to repeat itself and Harry shares his father's fate. He realizes himself and expresses his feeling of loneliness as follows:

Not yet; I will ring for you. It is still quite light
I have nothing to do but watch the draw out.
Now that I sit in the house from October to June,
And the swallow comes too soon and the spring will be ever
And the cuckoo will be gone before I am out again. (67)

Eliot portrays the return of Harry to his home after an absence of eight years and his departure again after three hours. Within these three hours, in the current of the play Amy's selfish tendency to keep her son in Wishwood is thus explained.

I don't want the clock to stop in the dark
If you want to know why I leave Wishwood
That is the reason. To keep Wishwood alive
To keep the family alive, to keep them together,
To keep me alive, and I live to keep them. (71)

Amy's view is not the same as that of her sister Agatha's and for dramatic purposes, Eliot states through Amy that

Only Agatha seems to discover some meaning
In death which I can't find. (71).

The play portrays Wishwood and now it has none except Amy and Agatha, hardly gathering “aunts and uncles”. These guests have gathered neither in affection nor dislike, but from a habit of family solidarity (29) in obedience to Amy. Eliot presents these characters not to illuminate the action, but to express their inability to understand what is happening.

Harry feels guilty of his uncommitted murder and hears his mother’s words that he should go up and dress for dinner, as it will make him better after a hot bath. And he gives an opportunity for the family to discuss Harry and his mental condition. Harry is also in a state of mind which he finds almost impossible to explain to anyone else. Harry is brooding over his past and present, his loss of innocence and present guilt. As Harry himself says, “You do not know what hope is until lost it” (73).

Eliot presents Harry’s opinion, as he finds his real self while conversing with Marry; Mary suggests that Harry is still capable of hope, and he must have hoped for something in returning to Wishwood. Wishwood proves to be a cheat, perhaps the cheat was in himself-cheating his will. As a normal human being Mary’s words and the intimacy that goes with them-touched Harry with a glimmering attraction, a kind of returning hope and says

You bring me news

Of a door that opens at the end of a corridor. (109)

It is so because “There was no ecstasy since his marriage” (32) and so this attraction slightly intoxicates his mind and affects a possible ‘way of escape’. Mary tells him that “Harry has to be born twice; and that is painful” (32). This seems to be

the very essence of the play. Eliot presents this sick-souled person who is deeply conscious of his own sinfulness and of the sinfulness of the world around him.

Thus the central action is about his sin, the “Origin of Wretchedness” which was behind Harry’s childhood and which destroyed his marriage. Through the words of Agatha, it is clear that Harry’s future would be built upon the real past.

Nevill Coghill states that Agatha revealed to Harry the nature of love, a thing outside his experience till then; for he is cursed to bear the lovelessness of his family (34). Further Agatha is able to teach him that love is of two kinds: “the love of attachment- of man to woman-and the love of detachment- of man or woman from all created beings-that leads to divine union; that diverting of oneself from the call of the world which, St. John of the Cross tells us, is the way to be taken by those who seek to unite their wills with the will of God” (34). Even Agatha does not speak of God directly and of taking the way of the cross but she has in mind the pursuit of austerity through self-denial and doing service to others. Of earthly love she says,

There are hours when there seems to be no past or future,
Only a present moment of pointed light
When you want to burn. When you stretch out your hand
To the flames. They only come once. (147)

Agatha’s experience of divine love is more doubtful but its austerity is thus expressed:

Perhaps there is another kind,
I believe across, a whole of Tibet, of broken
Stones that lie, fang up, a life-time’s march.

I have believed this. (148)

Agatha herself comes closer to Harry to explain their destiny saying that it is not a story of detection—"of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation" (148). Eliot's metaphorical mention of purgatory is an explicit use of Christian symbol in the play and Agatha explains it thus:

It is possible

You are the consciousness of your unhappy family

Its bird sent flying through the purgatorial flame

Indeed it is possible. You may learn hereafter,

Moving alone through flames of ice, chosen

To resolve the enchantment under which we suffer. (148)

Eliot has tied the Eumenides into his pattern of thought in finding an equivalent for the transformation of the Furies through the difference between Hell and Purgatory, in the acceptance of the purifying fire. This brings from Harry immediate cry of joy.

Look I do not know why,

I feel happy for a moment as if I had come home,

It is quite happy, as if happiness

Did not consist in getting what one wanted

Or getting rid of what can's be got rid of

But in a different vision. This is like an end. (140)

And thus he speaks of his future in the most general terms:

Where does one go from a world of insanity

Somewhere on the other side of despair.
To the worship in the desert, the thirst and deprivation,
A stony sanctuary and a prime altar,
The heat of the sun and the icy vigil,
A care over the lives of humble people,
The lesson of ignorance, of incurable diseases.
Such things are possible...
I must follow the bright angel. (157)

All these lead Harry to choose the path of the missionary. Thus Harry's change of heart, change of direction, and his understanding of his suffering come not only simply with the disclosures of the past but through the illumination of the past and the present. All these central figures are chosen to be the objective correlatives of the spiritual forces set in motion by the curse of lovelessness transmitted from Amy and her husband, to Harry and his wife, with their attendant 'murders'.

And there was no love at Harry's begetting, no love but domination in his upbringing, no love in his flight from Wishwood, no love in the marriage into which he fled and in both men; they will to murder a woman had been aroused. The men, at first are dominating personalities. Later Harry submits his will to the will of God.

The play comes to an end with Harry's departure and the psychological truth carries the readers and the audience forward with a specific conclusion. Harry is convinced that his "Obligation is not to his mother but to God; that he is one of those are called to "leave all and follow" (Gardner 155). As Harry announces his departure,

Amy finds that her future is taken from her; she is left alone with the present and 'the clock stops in the dark'.

Eliot displays in this play various levels of consciousness as he did in Murder in the Cathedral. He satisfies both the playwright and his audience by means of many devices pertaining to the theme, the action, the protagonist, the symbolic context, the ritual imagery and the Chorus. In this connection, Becket's sermon and the final chorus can be cited as relevant illustration. Eliot, in The Family Reunion improves upon these methods and makes it more relevant to the everyday experience of the audience. 'He tries to win over his audience to a new way of life' (Sean Lucy 192). The immediate experience of the audience gets precedence. The world presented on the stage is contemporary in every sense of the world and Eliot keeps his audiences in the surface reality of their world of experience. Ironically, the family expects one kind of reunion but experience another kind. Similarly Mary and Harry present their relationship through a feeling of divine love. Eliot makes the appearance of Eumenides, a device of the 'make-believe' on the stage. And it is analogous to the knight's addressed at the end of Murder in the Cathedral. Even the Chorus in The Family Reunion follows the same pattern. It has been closely integrated into the play. Eliot follows the tradition and it consists of Harry's aunts and uncles. Its role is essentially different from that usually assigned to the Greek Chorus. It is nothing but a sense of 'illuminating the action'; to create a relative feeling of inability to find what is going on, on the stage. For instance,

We do not know what we are doing,

And even, when you think of it,

We do not know much about thinking;

What is happening outside of the circle?

And what is the meaning of happening. (348)

They suddenly abandon their natural conversations and begin to speak as if in a trance. Eliot suspends the flow of 'outward action' and tries to reveal some mystery of the 'inner life' from the hinterland of man's mind. Therefore, it reaches beyond the ordinary members of the audience and reaches higher regions of consciousness.

Eliot blends two kinds of worlds, the normal and the spiritual in The Family Reunion also. In the normal world, there exist different layers of reality, where each character talks and reacts according to his level of understanding. The knights presented in Murder in the Cathedral, are ordinary people, they can see events but cannot interpret them in their appropriate context. They belong to the ordinary phase of the audience. The most impressive of such characters in The Family Reunion is Amy, the mother of Harry. The rest includes Amy's sisters, her brothers-in-law, Harry's uncles and aunts. The spiritual world has only one representative, Agatha (Harry's aunt) at the beginning, and Harry at a later stage. It is Agatha who gives Harry the necessary guidance and instruction to accept "Sin and Expiation". Harry wants to remain silent in action. He does not communicate much with the other characters. Thus Eliot portrays the psychological aspect of Harry's consciousness.

Eliot thus provides a string to the various meanings which run through the surface level by means of the "Orestes myth" and religious rituals. It can be clearly said that the main purpose in constructing this type of thematic complex was to present a modern counterpart to the experience of purgation through religion. Eliot

has excluded “Christian terms” from the action and the verse of the play, but his intention was to have the “Christian view” of man’s condition emerges from a commonplace setting of the secular modern life. In Antony George’s view, Orestia of Aeschylus also adheres to a similar pattern suggesting the connection of this theme with ritual and myth. As Agatha states,

what we have written is not a story of detection

Of crime and punishment, but of sin and expiation. (148)

Eliot has provided the two ritual struggles between the “order of earth” and “the order of heaven”. He tries to reflect a religious experience in contemporary terms deriving from myth. The Greek sources furnish him with material for the purpose of religious recognition. Eliot converts them into Christian terms and integrates them in his ritual play, The Family Reunion. The title itself is ironical at the familial level and factual at the spiritual level. The play ends with Harry leaving his family and leaving his mother alone. But he leaves the illusory family only to rejoin the Lord in a spiritual union. By giving up Wishwood, the world of Wish and Will, he becomes a martyr, Wishwood represents sin, the guilty the past and fearful future. Through Agatha Harry learns that sin is not action only. Even a thought, a wrong motive is sin. Harry’s father and Harry himself have been guilty of the sin of uxoricide as they had wanted to kill their spouses. The only way out would be to renounce the past and hope for the future, and live the present. That is, they have to take up the cross and willingly undergo the suffering of Being so that the past and future cease to exist, times comes to a standstill and man is born a second time; but this time he is born into the Eternal, the timeless, leaving behind Wishwood once and for all. Having been

left alone Amy has to face herself and hence she is a prospective martyr. In Eliot's play ordinary men, like Harry, are projected as potential martyrs. Women are not left behind. If Agatha is spiritually evolved person in *The Family Reunion*, Celia of *The Cocktail Party* does the star turn.

In *The Cocktail Party*, Eliot concerns himself with the theme of maladjustment between wife and husband and how the psychiatrist priest Harcourt-Reilly, corresponding to the doctor in mediaeval drama, brings about a reunion between them. But Eliot manages to conceal the origin of the play so well that no one could recognize the resemblance between the two plays unaided by the author. Eliot's main concern is still religious significance. He himself declares of a feeling which we can detect and be aware of in a kind of temporary detachment from action. And Eliot moves nearer to the style of the naturalistic drama in this play. True to his theory, he adopts tradition and the plot in the play has been taken from *Alceste*. In the Greek play a dead wife is restored to life by the intervention of Heracles. Here, a runaway wife is brought back as if from the dead. In both the cases a marriage which had ended has to begin again. The play starts with a cocktail party. It may plainly be regarded as a domestic play dealing with the problems of marital relations, where Edward, Lavinia and Reilly are the central figures. These central figures are flanked by two persons, Celia and Peter who are yet to marry. Eliot follows his own way of the tradition he has adopted from the story from the Greek drama but has tried to interpret the same in terms of modern life.

In *The Cocktail Party* Eliot pays more attention to the element of suspense in the play and to the subtleties of characterization. The opening of the play is

surrounded by an atmosphere of mystery, with the unexpected absence of Lavinia from the cocktail party and with the presence of the unidentified guest. There is no direct suggestion of the supernatural as in the other plays but beneath the superficial social chatter the spiritual conflict with which the characters are confronted is heavily underlined. Eliot does not alternate between the tragic and the comic as in the early plays but fuses the two. He goes to the extent of providing the conventional love triangle comprising Celia in love with Edward, Peter in love with Celia and Lavinia in love with Peter. The psychiatrist priest provides a camera-eye in this fast changing situation. The tragedy of the lives of the major characters is that they suffer from a 'loss of personality'.

Most of the time we take ourselves for granted
As we have to, and live on a little knowledge
About ourselves as we were. (36)

The real trouble with Edward and Lavinia is that they have been living a life which they have taken each other for granted without knowing the reality of experience between the two. Eliot says that we are not justified in fixing the image of a person at a particular movement, for 'we die to each other daily'.

To pretend that they and we are the same
Is a useful and convenient social convention
Which must sometimes be broken. (74)

Edward and Lavinia have been excising an unconscious preserve each has formed of the other, resulting in a distortion of their marital relations. Lavinia's

restoration after a few hours implies the death of her former life, having the same significance as the death of Alcestis had for Ademetus in the play by Euripides;

I thought that if I died
To you, I who had been only a ghost to you,
You might be able to find the road back
To a time when you were real. (85)

Reilly is able to diagnose the real malady from which both Edward and Lavinia have been suffering. They are 'only pieces of a total situation' which he has to explore. Their sense of isolation resulting from the wasping of their personalities is brought out in these lines;

A man finds himself incapable of loving
And woman who finds that no man can love her. (123)

In Murder in the Cathedral, Eliot wrote a play about England's most famous saint. In The Cocktail Party Eliot concerned himself with the making of a new saint in the person of Celia. Celia is weighed down by an awareness of solitude and a sense of sin. The role of Sir Harcourt Reilly in the play makes his patients choose their own way of reunion. They can be reconciled to the human condition and have 'new life' as the Edwards have at the end of the play, or they can choose the way of faith and atonement as Celia does. She chooses the way of dispossession and reunification and is no less of a saint than Becket was.

Thus, The Cocktail Party tells of a study of the search for a religious vocation. From Edward's point of view his relationship with his wife depends on his being respectably married. Celia has to face along with her husband this unpleasant truth.

Her disillusionment at the lack of passion which is the hollow reality of Edward's character has a positive aspect. It makes her realize that this love was not really what she sought. This transforms her into one of Eliot's characters whose problem is to fulfill a religious vocation. In realizing this she is greatly assisted by Sir Henry Harcourt Reilly.

In his role of priest, Reilly interviews Celia and prescribes for her a sanatorium which is evidently some kind of curative ecclesiastical establishment. Celia's spirit does spread wings and she obeys Reilly's instructions to work out her salvation diligently. She realizes her own mistake and feels 'sinful' for the mistake. Yet she can find no other word for her feelings. Celia is making a blind attempt to express the newly felt promptings of the mystical side of her nature. For the moment she has passed beyond the grief and shock of the 'crash' and being 'ditched' by (130) Edward to the realization that she is alone and aware of guilt or sin, or failure, because of mistaking the love between her and Edward for the real thing; whereas the treasure she was seeking, the love she is looking for, may be an illusion; lover and beloved, dream and dreamer all equally unreal(135); unless the ecstasy of love is real, though those experiencing it have no reality (136), if that is possible. She attempts to describe this ecstasy as an intensity of loving in this spirit, a vibration of delight without desire, for desire is fulfilled in the delight of loving (136). Reilly offers Celia's choice of alternatives whether she can be cured of a longing for a visionary love which she has not found and cannot find. Thus first possibility is having a glimpse of some spiritual vocation and of answering it fully enough to reach it. The next is being 'transhumanised' that is to accept the human condition that finds its way of love in marriage and a family. The last words spoken by

Jesus from the cross, according to the Gospel of St. John (XIX. 30) "It is finished" (142) completes the work in bringing Celia to a clear decision and the choice of 'transhumanised' way of life. Celia is ready to submit to the will of others and thus she surrenders to God.

And thus The Cocktail Party ends with a second party balancing that with which the play opens with the same guests present. Alex tells Peter that Celia is dead, having gone to Africa as a missionary and been 'crucified....nearer an ant-hill' (169) by some 'heathens' who were making an insurrection. While conversing with them Reilly explains that she did not know what form her death would take but that he directed her in the way of preparation.

That way, which she accepted led to this death.

And if that is not a happy death, what death is happy? (174)

And goes on explaining that Celia suffered far more than any one of them would ever be able to suffer, being more conscious.

She paid the highest price

In suffering. That is part of the design. (175)

No one, not even Peter, who was in love with Celia and who is not a guardian, challenges the assumptions behind Reilly's statement. The most striking of these is that her death was not defensible as a risk undergone for the sake of doing real good to ignorant people but triumphant because she perfected her will, bringing it into conformity with the Will of God and thus receiving martyrdom.

It was time to entertain guests who are arriving for the cocktail party. Lavinia says, 'But all the same... I don't want to see these people' (175). To which Reilly

characteristically replies, 'It was your appointed burden, and as for the party, I am sure it will be a success' (175).

In projecting the play, two souls are recovered from the dark in two different senses. Reilly restores a selfish wife to a selfish husband, so that they can learn to endure each other and to endure their reflection of themselves in each other. It is one at a higher level. At a higher level still, Reilly brings back Celia's soul from the dead from destitution and restores her to life. And there is another recovery that, in restoring her to a life which is the saint's death, he restores the world from sickness of life. Eliot, thus, fulfils Celia's soul in restoring life and meaning to the religious act of atonement. And thus Celia is identified as a martyr.

Although Eliot keeps the religious significance of the play in the background, Celia's death has to be interpreted at the same level as Becket's. It has been atonement for the sin of the community as a whole. The cocktail party given at the end of the play in a way brings us back to the starting point and thus emphasizes the circular structure of the play.

This is how Reilly has taken the death of Celia, by seeing on her face the astonishment of the first five minutes after a violent death which has to take place later. In its own way, The Cocktail Party reiterates the theme of the realization of the Four Quartets. Again, as in The Wasteland, Eliot had utilized ancient myths to point out the significance of a modern situation. Here he has used the classical background of Alcestis and the Christian concept of confessor priest to point out the inadequacy towards the problem of maladjustment. The truths known to Christianity since long are expressed by psychology in a form which is comprehensible to the modern mind but it cannot explain

the profounder emotions of religion. Thus although the estrangement between Edward and Lavinia can be traced back to repression, psychology cannot account for the martyrdom of Celia.

The Cocktail Party seems to be a delightful play. At one phase, the members of the audience would have enough satisfaction from anything like manners and attitudes and at another phase it has a kind of greater 'spiritual consciousness' having philosophy, wit and religion. As a "comedy", it should be assumed to offer an ironic interpretation of contemporary life. Sir Henry Harcourt Reilly, the divine investigator prescribes cures to his visiting patients and this provides them their moments of obligatory choice. The cure, he suggests is a cure within the society. As he explains to Edward and Lavinia;

And now you begin to see, I hope

How much have you in common, the same isolation.

A man who finds himself incapable of loving

And a woman who finds that no man can love her. (123)

Sir Harcourt Reilly plays a significant role in resolving complex tangles. He brings the couple, Edward and Lavinia to know themselves and their situation. Again he helps in the process of reconciliation Edward realizes the truth and says:

Lavinia, we must make the best of a bad job

That is what he means. (124)

As Edward is also in this condition, he wants Lavinia back. At first Celia cannot believe it, and puts it down to a temporary weakness, overwork, mental illness; she tries to lend him her strength.

Will you assure me that everything is right,
That you do not mean to have Lavinia back
And that you do mean to gain your freedom,
That's all that matters. Truly, Edward,
If that is right everything else will be,
I promise you. (64)

But Edward remains firm in his weakness. It is too late and he has lost the desire for all that is most desirable (68). There is a kind of climax in self-realization for each of them as the scene draws to its strange close. Edward seems that the effort to escape from his own mediocrity, though his love-affair with Celia was only make-believe, a furtive attempt to find a way out of the joyless realities of his marriage,

a pretence

That what is, is not, or could be changed. (64)

Edward says that he must be dull. The dominating apathy of his nature which keeps him safe guards him from adventure and rules him as much as some other men are ruled by an inner genius.

But in men like me, the dull, the implacable,
The indomitable spirit of mediocrity. (64)

As he makes this confession, it seems to Celia that she is witnessing a total change in Edward's nature. However, Miss Celia's case is different. She wants to be cured of "emptiness and failure" towards someone, "outside herself". Reilly offers her the choice involves sacrifices and leads to a long journey. As Reilly says,

The second is unknown, and so requires faith

The kind of faith that issues from despair.

The destination cannot be described;

You will know very little until you got there;

You will journey blind. (136)

Celia, unlike Edward and Lavinia, chooses the way of atonement in place of reconciliation. Her choice is dictated by her realization that life for her can never be the same again. Her immediate reaction is to withdraw from it in pursuit of something higher. The implications of Celia's choice reveal an under-pattern and the play runs parallel to the surface pattern of the play's action. Its particular significance lies in the fact that it derives its existence from the spiritual content of the play. This creation appeals only to the conscientious section of the audience. In this context, the choice of Celia is essentially the same as that of Becket, the martyr in Murder in the cathedral and the same as that of Harry, the expiator of ancestral guilt in The Family Reunion.

The action on Celia's side moves from the region of human love or religion – giving herself to God. Lavinia's assumed death and her coming back symbolize death and rebirth which amounts to a process of 'disentanglement from their search for the divine in the human' (Matthiessen 227). In the relation of Edward to Lavinia, Eliot shows a man subject to such pressure as call for submitting one's will to the will of God. And by Reilly's advice Edward and Lavinia have found their way to humanity.

Reilly's 'sanatoria' resembles private hotels rather than clinics. And her Sir Henry is also in touch with certain religious houses he also calls 'sanatoria' and to these entrusts those patients whose malaise is a sense of the sins of the world and a spiritual craving to expiate or atone for them by a life of dedication, to a self-surrender to a

power whose beauty and attraction they have felt or glimpsed and which may be called the will or love of God.

Love, can be presented under two traditional modes, One of them is that which withdraws from the contemporary world of daily life under 'rows of chastity, poverty and obedience, into monasteries and converts or in missionary and healing work under a religious discipline' (241). The other is that of a life lived in 'the normal, natural bustle of the world, and which, if moved by love, takes other rows- the rows of marriage, which it calls a sacrament' (241). In both ways of life, love is seen religiously, as a calling, a vocation, either to the love of God, or to the love that makes a human family.

Thus The Cocktail Party lies at the heart of the matter; the love of God awakens in Celia and a love for each other awakens in Edward Chamberlayne and his wife Lavinia; each love discovers its right fulfillment, one in the making of saint, and the other in the remarking of a broken marriage. The answer given as to which way of love is the better, is

Neither way is better

Both ways are necessary (138).

And this is the third play of Eliot's culminating in the study of Christian sainthood to which Eliot has given dramatic form. It is a great step forward in Eliot's endeavour. He fuses speech and poetry in an effective manner, and elicits the under pattern of the plot, uses myth for the purpose of extracting religious recognition for the terms of Christianity.

Eliot has framed the play, The Cocktail Party in three levels as he did the other plays. Glancing over the play at the literal level we find it constituted by the purely

contemporary setting and situation. It deals with man in society and not in isolation. The play presents totally fellow citizens. The four characters Edward and Lavinia, Celia and Peter, face a challenge from another of the opposite sex. Reilly plays the role of an intermediary and consulting psychiatrist. Through him, the play sustains its interest in the spiritual level.

At this level, it can be said that the play has a moral also. In Murder in the Cathedral Eliot combined the conventions of morality with those of Tragedy and Chorus. In The Family Reunion, he fused tragic choric poetry and a contemporary setting. A similar feature is displayed in The Cocktail party also. The didactic note is present everywhere. It is strange that loving persons cannot marry. This existing dilemma has been made permanent in the play.

Focusing at the analogical level, the play is deeper and even more serious. When Edward happens to know that his wife has left him, he is upset. He is nothing but “an object cub” or a “stalled engine”. An unidentified guest narrates his plight as follows:

You no longer feel quite human

You are suddenly reduced to the status of (an object

A living object, but no longer a person.(85)

Edward himself is aware of his own state of mind, as he confesses to Celia; “I don’t know what has happened or what is going to happen; And try to understand it, I want to be alone (55). Reilly states Edward’s soul-in-agony thus:

The Centre of reality But stretched on the table,

You are a piece of furniture in a repair shop

For those who surround you, the masked actors. (85).

All these statements not only depict the spiritual agonies of Edward but also indicate the level of spiritual need. Reilly acts as a spiritual surgeon, parallel to those of God with man. Eliot adopts his subjective ideas in an objective stage.

In presenting Reilly, Eliot shows an outstanding feature of his thematic plan in this play, since these remedies always signify a sense of religious recognition in terms of Christianity. For example, the Chamberlaynes in The Cocktail Party accept reconciliation, indicating the significance of the positive way of Christian marriage. Celia's option for atonement can be better understood in the light of the doctrine for Christian sainthood; similarly, the concept of choice between 'destiny' and 'freedom' which is the theme of The Cocktail Party. It is another example of Eliot's concern for the Christian, but a wrong choice is always fruitful and leads to the reward of spiritual quest. As Julia states,

Everyone makes a choice, of one kind or another

And then must take the consequences. Celia chose

A way of which the consequence was kinkanja.

Peter chose a way that leads him (Boltwell. 177)

Eliot's achievement is not much in such religious themes but in the symbolic pattern underlying its dramatization. It may be regarded as equal to his concept of an impersonal art. What he aims at is not merely a symbolic structure but an organism of sensuous symbols that projects an order out of the ordinary facts of human life.

Eliot's adherence to the mythical method is a clever device to present experience in symbolic form. He regards it as one of the direct and natural modes of human expression. In his opinion, the mythical method, as against the narrative one can present

better the hinterland of man's mind. By way of analogy and irony it can offer new grounds to extract suggestive evocations of different ideas from the audience. Eliot feels that the story of the myth, besides yielding appropriate objective correlatives may also furnish the playwright with a suitable material 'to weave the web of an under-pattern' in the drama. Such a pattern concealed as it is in the structure of mythical fables, leads to the creation of deeper levels of meanings, which the playwright wants to convey to his audience. The ordinary pattern supplies entertainment of a crude type, the under pattern invites a tension of some members who belong to a higher category of sensibility.

In fact, Eliot's assumptions recognize connections between the personality of the author and his creations.

It seems to me that what happens when an author creates a vital character, is a sort of give and take. The author may put into that character, besides its attributes, some trait of his own, some strength or weakness, some tendency to violence or to indecision some eccentricity even, that he has found in himself. Something perhaps never realized in his own life something of which those who know him best may be unaware, something not restricted in transmission to characters of the same temperament, the same age, and least of all, the same sex... I believe that the author imparts something of himself to his characters, but I also believe that he is influenced by the characters he creates. (Matthiessen 21).

According to Eliot's belief, the intense feelings, ecstatic or terrible are something, which every person of sensibility may claim to know. It is subjective at the

first phase and has an objective quality of a higher order in the next. Eliot won this faithfully in characterizing Thomas Becket, Harry and Celia. The ordinary persons according to him put the crude type of feelings to sleep, while the artist keeps them alive by his ability to intensify the world of his emotions. Hence, these emotions assume a social dimension the moment the artist tries to transmute them into something rich, strange and universal.

The play reminds us of the structure of the comedy of manners in the quarrel between Edward and Lavinia while in the characters of the guardians-Julia, Reilly and Abe-we have Eliot's ideas of a Christian society, a society in which the natural end of man's virtue and well-being in community, is acknowledgement for all; and the supernatural end that is for those who have eyes to see it.

In The Cocktail Party Eliot succeeded in evolving poetry of speech which was his ideal of a medium poetic drama. It was the practical application of the dictum enunciated in 'Poetry and Drama' that 'the chief effect of style and rhythm in dramatic speech, whether in prose or verse, should be unconscious' (SP 66). Eliot tried to follow the self-imposed rule to avoid poetry which could not stand the test of strict dramatic utility. With the result the verse of the play is shorn of all redundant imagery and it achieves a taintless quality responding to every shade of character. It can communicate the superficial drawing-room atmosphere of the ending of the play, the subtle shades of feeling that are expressed in the dialogue between Celia and Edward and Edward and Lavinia and the aphoristic nature of some of the statements of Harcourt-Reilly, as in the following:

Disillusion can become itself an illusion

If we rest in it. (136)

Raymond William says in *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* that “the verse from developed by Eliot in the play is a very remarkable achievement, for it is both eminently speakable and also the instrument of complete precision in the expression of feeling” (135). It is not loaded with the jarring rhythms and bizarre imagery of the early poems, nor does it ‘have the highly evocative rhythms of the *Four Quarters* because Eliot wanted to make verse as natural a medium for drama as possible. Although the verse of The Cocktail Party may be difficult to distinguish very wide range of feelings, Eliot raises the verse to the level of poetry in the lines uttered by Celia.

For what happened is remembered like a drama

In which one is exalted by intensity of loving

In the spirit, a vibration of delight

Without desire, for desire is fulfilled

In the delight of loving. (136).

Thus Eliot fuses prose and poetry, to produce effect which suggests that both the unevolved like Lavinia and Edward and the evolved like Celia’s merit on martyrdom. For Eliot, martyrdom is not always willingly embracing violent death as demonstrated by Beckett and Celia. It is the readiness to die a daily death in utter surrender to the will of God. Edward and Lavinia embrace this path.

Hence, Eliot and Tholkāppiyar deals with the essence of form and content become inevitable in literature and thus Tholkāppiyar names literature as *seyyul* – that which is composed – and says that the elements of literature are thirty four (313

(223). It appears from his statement that these classifications and naming are none of his own but of his predecessors. So it is to be inferred that the forms of literature had drawn the attention of the poets even during the centuries which preceded Tholkāppiyar. They have established that literature, whatever its content might be must yield aesthetic pleasure by the manner in which such content has been handled. It seems that literature has been considered as a fine art and like all fine arts; it has its own laws and conditions of workmanship being developed from ancient times.

Gurrey says, “Expression, sound, and rhythm, arranged in a particular pattern which we call the form, require us to obey a certain order and envelopment of thought, of imagery and emotion; and it is this shaping of a poem structurally which gives to poetry the necessary qualities of formal beauty which we find also in sculpture, music, painting; namely, balance, symmetry climax or focus, contrast, repetition and that structural rhythm which includes movement, continuity, proportion and unity”(102) what Eliot meant ‘auditory imagination’ is found in Tholkāppiyam.

“It is not the thing but the saying that moves us, not the matter but the manner of its presentation”, (12) so says G.A Greening Lamborn.

These views find echo in the definition of literature made by Tholkāppiyar. The very verse, in which the elements of literature are given, seems to be a piece of art.

Letter, syllable, foot, *thalai*, line and rhyme are found to be the chief elements of a composition (*Seyyul*). Composition is divided into seven kinds. They are poetry, prose, *nūl* (systematic treatise), *vāymōli* (book of morals), *pisi* (book of proverbs).

Poetry and prose are named as *pātu* and *urai* respectively on the basis of meter and rhythm.

The names *ahaval*, *venba*, *kaḷi*, and *vanji* denote their metre and rhythm.

Among the thirty four elements of composition '*pa*' is said to be one which means, according to *Pērasiriyaḷ*, the rhyme of composition, which indicates the nature and kind of a poem even though its meaning is not understood, when recited. Hudson says, "Metre like music makes in itself a profound appeal to the feelings. Merely to arrange words in a definitely rhythmical order is to endow them, by some secret magic, with a new and subtle emotional power to touch them with a peculiar suggestiveness which in themselves, simply as words conveying such and such meanings, they do not possess" (Hudson 74). Lambourn has expressed the same view regarding the sound of the poem. He says "I have found that children enjoy the music of the milking song, in Jean Ingelon's High Tide, when it is well recited, as much as they enjoy a fine song; they like Tennyson's Frater, Am.....Vale, though they certainly cannot understand the words." (Lambourn 32)

Thāḱku and *Thōdal* are concerned with the sounds of the composition. So Tholkāppiyar seems to be wait aware of the role of the sound in the composition of the poems. Except *urai*, all are to be in the form of verses *urai* also is not to be without its diction. Because of its inclusion in the group of verses, it is to be inferred that *urai* also has some form endowed with sound. It lies in the poet's choice of melodious words and in their harmonious arrangement, it is a charm common as well to prose as to poetry, and is the secret of greatness, of the grand style in both.

Prose composition is said to be of four kinds (485 (240))

In those days as there was no intention for writing extensively in the form of prose, all resorted to the form of poetry which is noted for its brevity and intensiveness since there is a feeling of longing for poetry alone can be the mode to express the powerful intensity of the artist. This is what felt by Eliot for choosing Poetic drama as his medium of expression in his plays.

Hence, *Nūl* in Tholkāppiyam is said to be of systematic treatise. It has served as medium for dealing with the branches of science. The book which deals with the sciences also is expected to be written in a poetical form. All the books which deal with medicine, sculpture, astrology, astronomy, zoology, botany etc., are written in verse forms. The sciences of language and literature – Grammars – are in the verse forms. Tholkāppiyam itself is a fine example for illustrating the form of *nūl*.

The forms of *vāymōli*, *pisi* and *angatham*, are not available now. *Vāymōli* is interpreted as *mandhiram* about which we hold doubt. It is not the practice of Tholkāppiyar to give one name in one place and another name in another place in such a way as to make confusion in the minds of readers.

Pisi is said to be of two kinds (488 (241)) which seems to be in the nature of riddles.

Angatham is satire. It is of two kinds – *Sēmeporu!* and *Kārandhathu* (436 (235)). In English, also it is said that it has two main purposes.

“Two quotations from Dryden will illustrate the two main purposes of satire, to brand and castigate human viciousness, and to laugh at human folly” (Glassey 28).

Poems which contain satire are found instructive and interesting in all ages. *Muthumōli* is to be of proverb. There is a book by name *Palamōli Nānuru* as an illustration of this kind. The forms of these literatures are described clearly and found in the Tholkāppiyam in 471 to 502 songs.

Literature is made up of words. Words also have birth and earth; degradation and elevation. In the evolution of language they have ups and downs. Their meanings are either restricted or expanded. The authors of literature must be fully conversant with all these.

Nature is employed by the poets in many ways for many purposes. As every poet responds to nature according to the peculiar qualities of his own temperament the poetry of emotional interpretation takes many different forms as in the poetry of Sangam poets, for whom nature is the store-house of similes and metaphors; of *Nāyanmār* and *Alvārs* for whom the nature is the mediator between them and God; of *Kambar* for whom the nature is the solace and refuge to the troubled heart of his heroes ; and of *Sēkkilār* for whom nature is a mystical revelation of that eternal spirit in whom all the modes of life are one.

Therefore the poets or the makers of literatures are to be in close touch with the nature and nature of livelihood. Tholkāppiyar has paved the leading way as Eliot too did. Thus the literary study of the book on *Poruḷ* intends to reveal the nature and inevitability of form and content of literature to owe life to literature.

Chapter IV

Eliot And Tholkāppiar On Religion And Literature

CHAPTER IV

T.S. ELIOT AND THOLKĀPPIAR ON RELIGION AND LITERATURE

The greatness of literature cannot be determined solely by literary standards though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined by literary standards. Our religion imposes our ethics our judgement and criticism of ourselves and our behavior towards our fellowman. (RL 102).

Tamils were noted for their catholicity of outlook which enabled them to analyse any local feature in the wider perspective of the world. They thought in terms of the world in general. This attitude to universalize is said to be comparatively modern. But we get evidence of this attitude in early Tamil literature, as indicated by Tholkāppiyar in his work (*5Porul* (153))

It starts with the whole landscape in Tholkāppiyam and is divided into five *thiṇais* led to a similar classification of literary works as well. These *thiṇais* were noted for three major divisions of *muthal*, *karu* and *uri*. Every *thiṇai* was thus subdivided into three parts. The term *muthal* denotes space and time; Tholkāppiyam says that *muthal* is said to be time and space (4(153)).

Space and time are the two most important entitles of all the phenomena. They are limitless; their origin is unknown and unknowable. They are eternal. Thus they are considered as being the first of things. The capacity for abstract reasoning is indeed remarkably evident in ancient works of Tamil literature gives a pre-eminent place to the factors of space and time.

As mentioned earlier, all space on earth-the land-was divided into four regions as 'mullai' stands for forest region, 'kuṟiñji' stands for mountainous region, 'marutham' stands for the region of fields and 'neythal' stands for coastal region. All the space on earth is covered by this four-fold classification as 'pālai' is not strictly a natural division. Tholkāppiyar has not recognized 'pālai' among division of land. The term *kāduṟai ulakam*, *maivarai ulakam* etc., indicate that this regional classification may be applicable to the geography of the whole world.

While referring to a region, it is usual to refer to the natural resources or other manufactured products typical of the region. However Tholkāppiyar mentions the presiding deities of the various regions and gives them prominence. The poet does so only to stress the importance of godliness and piety necessary for the people.

During the age of Tholkāppiyar, 'Tamils' seem to be always God-conscious. There seems to be none who has no faith in God. Tholkāppiyar has put God first in the list of things which are called 'karu' – that which is fundamental and indispensable for leading the life; the food comes next to Good- (18(155)). So it is to be understood that they have valued the conception of God above all. Further, when Tholkāppiyar gives a division of the regions, he gives the name of God whom the people of that regions worship. Now we value a town or country for its having a particular industry or product which is rare in other parts of the world. But Tholkāppiyar has valued God more than anything else (5(153)).

It is to be remarked that Tholkāppiyar is not a Jain who is not attached to God and that the Tamils of his time appear to be conscious of God always. Tholkāppiyar

refers to God as *kadavuḷ* which means one who is beyond human perception and conception, (88 (172) and that which means one who dispels sorrows (18 (155).

Kodinilai, *kandhali*, and *vaḷḷi*, referred in the verse 88 in *Poruḷ*, is interpreted by some scholars as to denote Sun, Fire and Moon, the worship of which appears to be prevalent in ancient Tamil Nadu. The word *kāndhali* is interpreted by Naccinārkkiniyar as one which stands aloof and unattached to anything without having any shape beyond all conceptions.

Prof. M.S. Puranalingam says: “The cultured Tamil conceived their God to be a Supernatural Being, characterized as *kodinillai* or the Great Fixed spreading all over likes a plant, *kandhali* or unattached quality, and *valli* or *arul* or the gift of grace. (Purnalingam 48) In short, they held universality, detachedness and grace as the chief attributes of their Maker and Ruler.

From the use of the expression *palvarai tehyvam* (57 *Sol*, (57), it is to be known that they believed that God is the maker of destiny and they called God himself as destiny that determines the course of life (93 (99). They allowed their sons and daughters to choose their partners in life themselves because of this belief in God (93(99). There are references to show that the prayer was offered to God at times of difficulty (115 *Poruḷ* (184). Fear of God was always emphasized (272 (217).

The word *korravai* is to be interpreted as those which bring success. But the commentators have given its meaning as Goddess of success; this meaning is not in conformity with the spirit of Tholkāppiyam in which God is not differentiated on the basis of functional activities as in the Sanskrit mythology. No reference is found in Tholkāppiyam about either temple or priest or form of worship. As Tholkāppiyam is

a science of language and literature, absence of such reference cannot be taken for granted to mean that they did not exist in his time. No reference is made about *mōksham* or *vidu* or other – worldly life after death. But he refers to three objects of life-Virtue (*Aram*), Wealth (*Poruḷ*) and Pleasure (*Inbam*)-in two places (92,418 (175,233) but not to ‘*Vidu*’ anywhere.

Ancient Tamils must be aware of the individual existence of soul and body, for, they named and divided the letters into ‘*uyir*’ (soul or life) and ‘*mey*’ (body).

The mention of the Gods, *Mayōn*, *Ceyōn*, *Vēndhan* and *Varunan* has led some to conclude that they are the same as *Vishṇu*, *Murukan*, *Iṇdhran* and *Varuṇan* worshipped by the *Āryans* and that the worship of the various Gods was established in Tamil Nadu only because of the contact with the *Aryans*.

It must be noted that the ancient Tamils traditionally worshipped God by various names, in various ways, though they strongly believed in one and only God, formless and nameless. They were essentially monotheists and the various names of *Mayōn* etc., refer to only one Supreme being or the Almighty. The very meaning of the various terms prove this fact: *Mayōn* means “one who is eternal or indestructible”, *Seyōn* means one who is beyond comprehension; *Vēndhan* means the supreme head or the loved one; *Varuṇan* means “one who stands for various hues or one who showers blessings. Thus all the four terms refer to the same being. When the commentators conversant with the later *Puraṇās* composed in Sanskrit, wrote the commentary of the Tholkāpiyam, interpreted the terms in accordance with the Aryan tradition. The indestructible one was interpreted as Lord *Vishnu* manifesting Himself

in birth and death. One who was beyond the knowledge of the undeserving ones was called *Muruka* who was imagined as Lord *Shiva*, and then relegated to the position of a younger brother of Lord *Ganapathi*. God who was the Supreme Head of all was also imagined as *Iṇdhiran*, the king of the *Devas*. The one of all colors or the giver of all came to be identified with the deity of *Varunā*, the God of rains. Thus the commentators have made it a difficult task indeed to correctly visualize the wonderful conception of God that the Ancient Tamils cherished.

Belief in God :

God, the first of all beings and existence, is not classified as coming under the first phenomena; the subtlety of this classification of God under the second category of *kaṟupporul* is worth scrutiny. Though human beings are created by God, there was a time when people lived without God-consciousness in Tamil Nadu. As time passed by, the varied experiences of life led to the awareness of the Supreme Being, who was again given various names and attached with varied personalities. Thus the beings are created by God, as they ripened in knowledge, created the concept of God. This concept was then considered inevitable for the good ways of life and so it gained pre-eminence. This concept then came to be considered superior to the physical needs of food and so on. Food might be given up but not God-consciousness. Thus, Tholkāppiyar places God above food.

Literature is to be in harmony with nature and God-conscious. Therefore it is necessary to make a study of the three aspects of above mentioned. It is interesting to note that *yāl*; the musical instrument is also classified under *kaṟupporul*. This shows

how much the ancient Tamils loved music. They considered music as part and parcel of life. Their love for music is evidenced in almost all works of ancient literature.

Uripporuḷ is said to be the act of union (*puṇarthal*), separation (*pālai*) waiting (*iruththal*) pity (*iraṅgal*) and variance (*ūdal*).

These acts give rise to the pertaining emotions or feelings generally take place in all *thinai*s; however, certain regions are notably standing for certain acts typical of them. Thus *kuṛinji* is noted for union, *Pālai* for separation, *Mullai* for *iruththal*, *neythal* for pity and *marutham* for variance (*udal*).

When the poets composed poems, the *muthal*, *karu* and *uri* must be appropriate to the *thinai*s take for the theme. All the Sangam works stand this test, with the perfect harmony of the *thinai* and the pertaining *poruḷ* or theme.

Though there are various songs coming under *kuṛinji-th-thinai* each of them is unique in its own way in its import and poetic appeal. Each is a literary masterpiece, quite enjoyable. The *kaṟupporuḷ* is likely to be changed because it is natural that what is characteristic of one region might be some other in another region. For instance that lotus strictly belongs to the *marutham* region; however, it may be found in the lakes of mountains as well. Again, the peacock usually lives in *kuṛinji* region; it may be found in the forests or *mullai* region. Therefore Tholkāppiyar says,

Eūnnila maruṅgin pūvum puḷḷum

Annilam poḷuthodu vārā vāyinum

Vaṇḍha ṇilaththin payaththa vākum (19 (155)).

(The flower and the bird of one region and season when not found in the region and season, ascribed to them, may belong to region where they appear.)

Literature is harmonious with nature and made one to feel God-conscious. Thus the study deals the aspect. When the names of the people were mentioned in songs, there were certain conventions observed in referring to them. Eliot too, took a fundamental view of life, literature and criticism like Tholkāppiyar which urged him to seek the supreme excellent and lasting standards in everything.

Eliot is the most commanding figure of twentieth century criticism in the English-speaking world. Eliot's reputation as a critic is universally known. "Almost everything he wrote gave food for thought". (Lodge, 69) He has made valid propositions on all aspects of life and literature on the problem and process of creative activity, on the survival of culture and civilization, above all on religion and social values. Pondering over his comprehensive outlook of life and literature, David Lodge states that Eliot had a mind that was cultured and cosmopolitan that ranged widely and confidently over European literature, ancient and modern. Readers of Eliot know that he believed every age should revalue the literature of the past ages according to its own standards. He further desired to see prophet-critics who shall appear from time to time, say a hundred years or so to review the past of our literature and place the poems in a new order. It was a dream he dreamt to come true of him. His fresh interpretations of Elizabethan dramatists, the metaphysical poets, the Caroline poets, Milton, the poets of eighteenth century, the Romantics Arnold etc., have set the poems and criticism in a new order in a new age.

This is in accordance with Eliot's reputation as a reformer of taste and skepticism of literature. His reforming and revitalizing of taste is having a set of serious habits in reading and writing and setting up a very high standard in art and outlook i.e. literature and criticism. He works hard at maintaining such standards in his poems and criticism. Those ideals and practical achievement of Eliot have come to vitalize in the entire letters.

Eliot's criticism is the most authoritative because we may say of its sincerity and freedom from any preconceived standards of judgement. The interpretation of life emerging from his poetry and prose is authentic because it arises from what he has actually felt and understood by studying the deepest elements of his nature in relation to the cosmic, natural and supernatural order of existence. Such a phenomenon in Eliot strongly persuades us to give him a very high place in the realm of art and criticism. With his high sense for order, discipline, clarity, creativity and fundamentalism he seems to take on himself an Aristotelian stature. His critical earnestness resembles the spiritual earnestness of Paul. In Paulean spirit, he defines, chides, admonishes, exhorts, raises pertinent questions and corrects, reveals and strongly persuades his recommendations. He shows a passion for probing and uttering the truth. He is perspective and circumspective and makes his arguments fool-proof. Among the critic he is an inspired prophet for many of his statements and findings are not only true, but stand the test of time. "Tradition and the Individual Talent", "The Function of Criticism" and "Religion and Literature" are aptly illustrating examples to it. They stand the test of time because Eliot has formulated his principles on the firm foundation of lasting truth of religion. And, it is our experience that this

firm principle has not been swept away by the ever changing courses of secular currents of time and whimsical popular opinion. Very few men of letters have felt the seriousness of religion having the most fundamental real and lasting influence on life so much as Eliot himself has. Amidst the growing twentieth century world of skepticism and falling values, where liberalism and secularism are the marks of deliverance and liberation, being rational and intellectual, Eliot has taken his firm stand on religion which is but an anachronism to many. He reaffirms this faith again and again throughout his compositions. In his "Idea of a Christian Society", he attacks the totalitarian powers for setting up a pagan counter religion. His extraordinary common sense fortified by a high order of intellectual power and an astounding visionary keenness has enabled him to comprehend 'the truth' religion has. This has convincingly led him to guide English literary criticism to complete itself "from a definite ethical and theological stand point..." (43).

Eliot "described his beliefs as a classicist in literature, a royalist in politics, and an Anglo Catholic in religion." (69). He was a strong supporter of order and discipline of authority and tradition. According to Eliot, "there is no common agreement" (RL 43) on the theological and ethical matters in the modern age. Therefore the reader has to be vigilant and discrete in his reading. He cannot afford to assume his own standards to scan a work of art when he passes his criticism on a work. The work of criticism can be carried out in collaboration with other studies. The other studies must necessarily and primarily include ethics and theology. However, a criticism born of the standards of ethics and theology need not be imposed on a work of art to assess its worth as literature. Literary standards are quite

adequate to determine it. It has to be measured by other standards. And the other standards are inevitably theology and ethics. Criticism cannot be complete without these standards for assessing the greatness of literature.

Ethics:

Of the two requisites ethics is disputable. It is disputable when we consider it a scale to scan the worth of great literature because it is not constant. It changes with the time from generation to generation. The history of moral philosophy found its origin in Aristotle. Later the Aristotelian ethics descended from St. Thomas Aquinas to Hooker and from Hooker through Locke to Burke. Aristotle's deep understanding of human nature, the celebrated chapters on his definition of happiness and the end of man, the entire philosophy has been weighed in the balance of time and there have been endless modifications to suit it to the convenience of changing times. It only means that when the common code is detached from its theological background and is consequently more and more, merely a matter of habit, it is exposed both to prejudice and to change. At "such times morals are being altered by literature" (43). Explaining it further Eliot adds "what shocks one generation is quite calmly accepted by the next." (44). It only shows ultimately "what unsubstantial foundations people's moral judgments have." (44)

Eliot in his critical essay on "Religion and literature" makes a detailed discussion on the application of religion to the criticism of any literature. In the first place he wants us to know that he does not mean religious literature when he relates religion and literature. After clearing this possible misunderstanding he dismisses the labeling of those books like the Bible as literature. He says we read the bible

“not because of its literary influence on literature but because it has been considered as the report of the word of God” (45). Next, he takes us into knowing what is meant by ‘religious poetry’ which he says belongs to the ‘department’ of religious poetry- “minor’ poetry”(45) and therefore it has nothing to do with what he means by ‘great poetry’. They are all “the products of a special religious awareness.”(45) In the same way, the type of poetry desirous of forwarding the cause of religion that can be called propaganda which can be excluded from the honour of being called great literature.

At this point, Eliot tells us that the literature he wants to find out is that which is “unconsciously” (46) Christian in its character. Eliot emphasizes this unconscious phenomenon because according to him the deliberate religious poetry is a conscious operation in a world in which it is assumed that religion and literature are not related. Therefore it is a limited relating (46). Eliot is much conscious about what secularization has done to literature, particularly the novel, he asserts that the secularization has not been and can never be complete.

He wants us to remember the practical aspect of people’s reading habit. People do not have any such compartmental thinking as religious or anti-religious when they read, for example, novels. Novel is taken here for an example because it is read by the greatest number of people. People stand in the danger of losing their religious values if they are not subtly clever to see it, and we know they are not most often when they give a passionate reading to novels. Now, it must be said here, that the meeting point of religion and fiction is behaviour. And it is in this connection does Eliot emphasize his view that “our religion imposes our ethics our judgement and criticism of ourselves and our behaviour towards our fellowmen”(47) and cautions us that

“the fiction that we read affects our behaviour towards our fellowmen, affects our patterns of ourselves,” and he continues that “when we read of human beings behaving in certain ways when the approval of the author, who gives his benediction to this behaviour by himself, we can be influenced towards behaving in the same way” (47). This awareness should caution us not to subscribe to the writer’s idea of life blindly. Thus the verdict of a novelist becomes unacceptable as he “is an individual thinking for himself in isolation” (47). The definitions and assessment of life and values of a novelist are partial in nature and is bound to be incomplete even absurd as majority of novelists though “have some sensitiveness, have ‘little intellect’”(47).

Next, Eliot speaks of censorship. He abhors the type of censorship that should take the place of decent domestic influence. Decent domestic influence itself is adequate censoring where state censor is not only superfluous but also dangerous because it, “acts only from custom and habit, not from decided theological and moral principles” (48). The pronounced danger of censorship is people begin to believe that books “which suppresses is not harmless” (48). And we can fully agree with Eliot when he says “whether there is such a thing as a harmless book I am not sure” (47).

It must be added here whether we intend to be or not we are affected by any book we read. Therefore our choice should be careful. The content and aesthetic pleasure cannot be compartmentalized while reading and one cannot afford to read only for aesthetic enjoyment shunning the probably unacceptable message. The literary taste is good enough to show our preferences of reading materials but it should not be a naïve experience as it will blind us to be critical. It must be borne in

the mind of the reader that when he reads a book it affects him directly. We discover when we look back that we have made a number of rejections in preference of a better author and this has been going on. Our mind is possessed from time to time by some stranger personality of a poet. This shows how empty the reader's mind is that he gives himself up to him completely. Soon the ripening reader makes serious assessment of the many poets who press entry into his mind and his critical mind begins to be cautious. It makes bold rejections and looks for books and poets who will guide it through lasting truth.

Eliot goes on to say that it is simply not true that a fiction gives us "direct" knowledge of life. It is knowledge second hand. The knowledge thus acquired through friction is "the knowledge of other peoples' knowledge of life"(50). The author's knowledge of life may be inaccurate and therefore there is the curse of presenting falsehood as truth. However it is true some good authors help us learn something of life though we can learn it ourselves by the same qualities with which the authors observe the so called truth of life themselves. At the same Eliot does not rule out the truth reading gives us "a variety of views of life" (50). No one can deny that respectable authors like Shakespeare, Dante, Goethe, Emerson and Carlyle do us a lot of good. They give us good and serious reading indeed. But Eliot observes it is the so called "light literature read mainly for "amusement" or purely for 'pleasure' that may have the greatest and least suspected influence upon us"(50). Therefore contemporary literature that is read "purely for pleasure" must be "scrutinized most closely" (50). It must be scrutinized most closely because "it affects us as entire human beings it affects our moral and religious existence"(51) and it affects us easier

as it is light in nature, for we must remember that what a writer does to people is not necessarily what he intends to do. It may be only what people are capable of having done to them. People exercise an unconscious selection in being influenced. A writer like D.H Lawrence may be in his effect either beneficial or pernicious. "I am not even sure that I have not had some pernicious influence myself"(51). Then, there is the theory of "automatic compensation and adjustment" (51). According to this speculation, all experiments compensate the innate inadequacies and what turns out at the end is a perfect adjustment of values. It appears to be a clever argument apparently as there is scope for humanity to be optimistic in developing to fullness in everything. Eliot points out that such a conjecture is valid "if we were always the same generation upon earth"(51). It is also questionable that people ever learn much from the experiences of their elders. That "unrestrained individualism" (51) leads to ideas knocking against each other and the fittest survive at the end, which emerges as truth triumphant is a comfortable thinking but a far fetched illusion. Eliot further draws our attention to the fact that in the world of ideas, "separate individuals" (52) do not exist; they can never exist because every individual is part in the present. To be an individual democrat is desirable but such an individual world is impossible as everyone is inevitably exposed to contemporary literature and shut of from the past. The tendency 'to keep up' and update with what is published totally annihilates any claim to individualism in literary taste and values.

However, it must be said, that Eliot agrees to the "valid distinction of good and bad and worse"(52) in modern literature. What Eliot regrets is "the whole of modern literature is corrupted by--- secularism that is simply unaware and simply cannot

understand the meaning of the primary of the supernatural over the natural course of life” (53). This according to Eliot is of primary concern.

Now what matters is not how we resent such secular contemporary literature but how we “behave towards it” (53). So there is a need for literary judgement as to what we like and what we ought to like. C.S. Lewis also shows his concern about his right judgement in his philosophical essay “The Abolition of Man” when he contemplates on the aim of education. He puts it thus; “Aristotle says the aim of education is to make the pupil like and dislike what he ought” (497).

Now, Eliot continues to have the right type of literary judgement one ought to know the acute difference between the great and the ordinary. And to know this acute difference one must be aware of “the two forms of self-consciousness, knowing what we are and what we ought to be” (“Religion” 53).

Simultaneously, Eliot suggests us the right and the only way to achieve these two forms in the following words. “It is not enough to understand what we ought to be unless we know what we are, and we do not understand what we are, unless we know what we ought to be”(53).

Eliot goes on to say that a Christian reader ought to be a responsible one that it is his duty to consciously maintain certain standards and criteria distinguishable from those of the rest of the world. He must subject everything to the tests of these standards and criteria. In other words, Eliot means that his standards of evaluation must be one of the highest kinds that have finality. Today, Eliot regrets, secularism seems to be the only hope of a large number of people. It gives them all liberty to do

whatever they wish once they fulfill their duties to the state and to their fellowmen. The contemporary literature reflects such an attitude and we must note, if it is encouraged, it will destroy all hopes of setting up a better world. The kind of secular morality as above is good in itself but mankind should not be satisfied merely with such a social adjustment and be complacent. As for the contemporary literature "It repudiates or is wholly ignorant of our most fundamental and important beliefs" (55). Just reading the contemporary literature only for the sake of tangible benefits is not only injurious but also an attitude of a low order. However, "we shall certainly continue to read the best of its kind, of what our time provides; but we must tirelessly criticize it according to our own principles" (55) of the highest order. These highest principles are necessarily those of theology according to Eliot.

Religion as an archetype:

Yet there is an aspect in which we can see religion as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave from morning tonight and even in sleep, and the way of life is also its culture.

The culture of a people is an incarnation of its religion ("Notes" 142).

The very monolithic conception of religion and literature may draw a derisive smile from some wise-cynics. Those who think of religion as nothing "but an anachronism" who have lost all roots because of too much of iconoclastic indulgence in modern secularism in everything including literature may wonder at the underlying unity of religion and literature. Looking back at the evolution of literature or rather the early history of literature, if we do not subject to such phrasing, we have proofs of religion being the basis of the edifice of literature. Several factors, all of which we cannot trace

here in detail are responsible for such drifting thinking. Rash understandings of dicta like “Art for Art’s sake” and catchy cants like Lowell are light-hearted. “Put all your poetry in your rhymes/ Join morals in your living” (Pritchard 123) and the endless disputes over art and morality and the judgments like “Art exhibits”(Scott James 293) and the function of moralist is to exhort”(293) have led the idea of religion and literature to polarize into separate entities. The modern mind which is all in a haste, does not probe beyond the over powering and dazzling axiomatic categorization like the following.

It is the business of the scientist to learn, know and prove. It is the business of the rhetorician to persuade of the moralist to teach. It is the business of the artist to show “Life ought to be like that, “says the moralist. “like looks like that”, says the artist(295).

A misunderstanding of this specialist language of the writer would prove fatal. Not all can understand it in the way it is meant. It is not an indirect prescription but only an observation of what different act with a given interest. A superficial understanding of this classification lights estrange in the end, the source and the by-product, viz religion and literature.

In order to know the nearness of religion and literature we need to trace the origin and development of religion and the role it has played in the evolution of literature.

Tracing religion

C.E.M Joad, with an astonishingly convincing style in his popular book The Story of Civilization briefly traces the origin of the concept of God and religion in the following way.

Primitive man found himself at the mercy of all kinds of material forces which he did not understand and could not control, thunder and lightning and earthquakes and floods. He could not imagine these things happening without something to make them happen, and according to his ideas something meant somebody. There must be the thought some kind of persons behind these thunder storms and earthquakes, and in this notion of somebody who caused dreadful things to happen we have the beginning of the idea of god (20-22).

And, in this idea of god was the seed of religion. Soon the priests became “the go-between man and Gods, who insisted the god, must be kept in good temper” (22). Sacrifices were to be offered to please them. Chanting hymns very often accompanied during such sacrificial offerings and this later developed into religious hymns. Swain also in his History of World Civilization refers to it. While speaking of pleasing spirits for poetry the primitive man “recognized his dependence on nature to produce his crops, and in time of drought he offered sacrifices and psalms of praise to persuade the spirits to grant favourable growing seasons and bountiful harvests (Swain 39).

Fear of God instilled in the early man a vague sense of good and evil. He instinctively felt an urge for order and discipline which first found expression in the manner of his offerings known as the ‘rites’. From then on, the noblest act of man came to be performing the rituals to honour and please his gods. Frye, in his searching essay “The Archetype of Literature”, traces the phenomena of the rituals in religion in the following way;

All important recurrences in nature, the day, the phases of the moon, the seasons and solstices of the year, the crises of existence from birth to death, get rituals attached to them, and most of the higher religions are equipped with a definitive total body of rituals suggestive if we may put it so, by the entire range of potentially significant actions in human life(Frye 429).

Such ceremonial observances in their development were incomplete without singing and chanting. As the worshipper became more and more civilized he tried to extricate himself from the idea of polytheism and moved towards monotheism. The higher religion insisted on the God whereas other religions found it convenient and reasonable to have a god for each department of human affairs. Frye calls them “departmental gods”(430) Man’s foremost preoccupation energies were exercised upon composing apt and rhythmic chants. The more ardent the devotee was the more complex and beautiful the chants were. Such hypothetical thinking can be valid when we place the historical man in the context of evolution of religion and worship. Then he became more and more aware of his being and his relationship with the world around him he began to realize that he should relate himself not only to his god but also to his fellowman and the things of the world around him. In the process of such awareness he became committed to the realities of values. Every aspect of human life and nature began to engage him and he began giving his thought to it. Therefore he, in course of time, began to observe and analyse, assimilate and realize appreciate and criticize and express the nature and course of the origin, development and future of men and matters.

The sky at the dawn with its variety of colours, the bright blue noon-sky and the evening horizon with its ravishing colour-play, the immense sea, the green grass, trees, tender flowers and the mountains speaking cotton-soft snow heaps the water falls and the winding rivers, the sun, moon and the stars, birds and animals, the dark mystery of the forests, the smile of children and the tender beauty of women and other blessings of creation all had their swaying effect on him and prompted in him a sense of the beautiful and the sublime, which formed itself into aesthetic sense. Once he became aware of this sense of beauty and imagination that enhanced it, he thought is right and proper to see the grandeur of god in the richness of his imagination and sense of beauty.

This naturally urged him to give expression to his thought and feeling that he might share his experience with his fellowmen. Filled with the thought of the grandeur of his gods or god and with the emotion of fearful joy born of his mystic bond with the deities and having the imagination tutored by the aesthetic and wonder element in nature and infinity the primordial man was led to compose rich and imaginative verses on the surprise being or beings in his ritualistic style. These were no doubt, the seeds of future literature. The idea of right and wrong that sprang from the idea of god, prevailed on the thinking of man and he created a code of value for the security of both his spiritual and physical lives. These values became more and more modified as man became more and more developed in the sense of justice. A set of such values and their observance became what is known as religion. Religion thus come into existence began undergoing several modifications and in the passage of time to become institutionalized. The Upanishads is a kind of a source that speaks of

institutionalized religions. Hinduism, Judaism and Zoroastrianism are known to be the refined versions of early religions. Such institutionalized religions wielded their great influence and made their powerful impact on their followers. Hence, every sphere of activity began to be affected by the normative of religion. Such close intimacy with religion shaped what is known as the religious instinct which became part of man ever since, affecting his thought and deed generations after generations to the present day. The noblest of human thinking ought to be born of the religion that lies at the innermost layer of human mind, covered up by accumulations of time and mundane pre-occupations. But it is possible that one may deny this base in explaining the noble expression of humanity. The reason for such denial is that he is not consciously aware of his archetypal phenomenon.

This is understood when the archetypes are researched. The Oxford Advanced Learner's English Dictionary defines, 'archetype' as 'proto type', an ideal form regarded as pattern not to be changed in other words, original pattern or model. In literature, it means the record of communal response of all men to certain patterns of experience and phenomena of nature. These patterns are inescapably an assimilated part of basic human behaviour. We may take few examples. One example for the archetypal experience of all people is grown from childhood to adulthood, from immaturity to maturity, from innocence to knowledge. This pattern is not only an individual experience but applies to collective experience as well. Thus, a well known myth which may or may not have basis in fact is the story of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve are prototype of father and mother. They are individuals, they are also all mankind. Their progress is from innocence to

knowledge. This results in their expulsion from Eden. This only gives rise to “another deep subconscious drive in all human beings the desire to return to the Edenic experience and the quest for a means, often a savior, to achieve it” (Irmischer 386-387). This brings about a chain of experiences like suffering, scarifies and death with the idea that these will bring about redemption, purification and immortality.

It is interesting to note that these human manifestations are seen in the cycles of Nature also: all things spring to life, grow, die and revive. All people seem to know and understand and believe these patterns of nature and experience.

Simple and powerful stories that are today called myths embodied the archetypal patterns I ancient days. These are there in every culture. They have common motifs and share symbols that are merely variations on one another. Even today the symbol mythic stories of the sun, moon, water and the garden fascinate us. It may be a story of a hero’s search against obstacles for the answer to a riddle or a sword or chalice that will make him a saviour, or of a hero’s willingness to die for the deliverance of his people or remove the bane of sterility from the land.

These archetypal and mythic patterns continue to emerge in both the structure and imagery of contemporary writers. The author whether intentionally or not, has once again recast one of the ancient myths in a new grab. These strains seem to demonstrate that beneath all of their knowledge and sophistication, modern people still cannot escape the most elemental concerns of their nature (387).

Carl Gustav Jung also in his contribution to the idea of the archetype through his theory of ‘collective unconscious’ takes a similar stance explaining that “the

civilized man preserves though unconsciously, these pre-historical areas of knowledge which he articulated uniquely in myth.” (Scott, James 248). It can be added not only in myth but in religion also. Wilber Scott also sees the truth in the strong appeal of the archetypal patterns to the creative imagination and observes in his preparatory notes to the “Archetypal Approach” in Five Approaches of Literary Criticism. “Its retention is the social memory strongly appealed to the creative imagination”(248) To support this illustration further we may recall what W.Y Tindal says in his “Forces in Modern British Literature” that “The deepest meanings, meanings which extend beyond the single body of books, are to be sought in the archetypal symbols to which writer’s compulsory turn”(249).

From what we have seen so far we may conclude that religion has stayed in man as an archetypal instinct as primordial, for instance, as the instinct of fear. And the religious instinct continues to pass through generations which may give expression to it consciously or unconsciously.

The rituals of the primitive man remain with the civilized man but in a different mode of existence. Reflecting on this, Wilber Scott observes, “Freud had established that rituals were dealt with consciously by primitive man but unconsciously by civilized man” (249)

This archetypal religious instinct soon inevitably seeped into the culture of the people and became part of their being. Eliot in his notes towards the definition of culture expresses how this instinct dominates in the life of a human being in the form of culture. He says that religion can be seen “as the whole way of life of a people, from birth to the grave, from morning to night and even in sleep and the way of life is

also its culture” (Bergonzi 158). Both Eliot and Tholkappiar sees the closeness of religion and culture so clearly that he deems the culture of a people “as an incarnation of its religion” (157). In Bergonzi’s view, culture for Eliot and Tholkāppiyar meant “religion-culture” (158) and it is this type of culture that redeems mankind ultimately. Tholkāppiyar seems to be aware of the ephemeral nature of the world on the basis of which he preaches morals to the world (78,79 (170)).

There is no mention of any religion or sect in Tholkāppiyam. Therefore, it is to be concluded that the religion found in Tholkāppiyam is the religion of the poets, humanism, and that the philosophy is the philosophy of living well, being useful to others. It arrives to the point of ancient Tamils as revealed by Tholkāppiyam is “Have faith in God and serve others”.

Religion : The Ultimate Value Setter.

There are certain things that our needs, and certain things that it should avoid. It needs compassion and a wish that mankind should be happy . . . it needs above all, courageous hope and the impulse to creativeness. The things that it must avoid, and that have brought it to the brink of catastrophe, are cruelty, envy, greed, competitiveness, search for irrational subjective certainty and what Freudians call the death wish.

The root of the matter is a very simple and old fashioned thing The thing I mean . . . is love, Christian love, or compassion. If you feel this, you have a motive for existence, a guide in action, a reason for courage, an imperative necessity for intellectual honesty. If you feel this, you have all that anybody should need in the way of religion. (Russell, 115)

The chapter presupposes that religion is not given its due place in the present world and much agonistic water has flown down the bridge of times. It also implies that the world without religion has not kept its promises and that there is a strong-felt need to give religion its right place. Now, we cannot trace the importance and indispensability of religion without being aware of the loss the world has suffered and the various forces, the events influences and circumstances that have led it into and made the world what it is today.

In other words, we must attempt a study of the modern age in general and the related factors like the social back ground, urbanization, fear and anxiety in the economic field, the enormous growth of science, the spirit of enquiry, the development of psychology and the growing interest in the subconscious, revolt against authority and international feeling, expansion of education and the literary tendencies of the modern age, etc., in order to make a proper assessment of void that these influences have created.

The dawn of the present century opened new vistas in life and literature. The men of observatories and laboratories offered both prosperity and bombs. The search for knowledge and solutions to various problems led man to explore the reservoirs of knowledge. The dialectical materialism of Marx and Engels, the comparative religions of Max Muller, the unorthodox views of the French philosopher Descartes (28) and the revolutionary view of Charles Darwin (34) on evolution rocked the world at large and the custodians of existing dogmas in particular. A new spirit of revolt enkindled by leading romanticist like Byron and Nietzsche culminated with the current ideas. Schelling and Hegel, the realistic philosophers considered ideas as

living beings capable of vigorous animation. The idea of the concept of time, space and energy changed. High profit motivated industrialists took over gadgets of economy. Natural Law and Natural Right were challenged outright by the sovereignty of the people. The magic wings of supersonic planes brought the continents closer, yet the gap of ideas widened. The war of ideas and ideals eventually led to the war of weapons.

The modern age has been dominated by the spirit of weariness and disillusionment. The rapid growth of science and economy and the world wars have completely shattered and disintegrated civilization (Swain 3). The world plays in utter ruins both physically and spiritually when the horizon was cleared off the smoke and fumes of mortars and the blaze of bombs after the First World War. Women were put to shame and there were cries of unclaimed war babies in the fashionable streets of the western world (Patterson 14). The marathon massacre of men shocked the human conscience on the earth making it a burning inferno of misery and the burial ground of the victims of man's wickedness. It was littered with the dead and the living-dead.

T.S.Eliot and Tholkāppiyar are sensitive in their mind and acted against the predicament of modern man's futility and misery and gave vent to it in his works. They have depicted the plight of the human soul and the anxiety, disillusion, instability, pessimism unsettlement in the post war life of the world. Eliot takes a Jeremiah-like vision of such spiritually barren land in his poetic master piece *The Waste Land*. In it he is out to show "fear in a handful of dust" (WL 46). Both were always aware of the world outside the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history. Eliot bared the futility and misery of the meaningless

existence of the “hollow men” around him. Such a world was worse than Milton’s hell. And just like a world fire, (Smith 90) aggressed the domain of ethics and Eliot was much annoyed of this.

The first related factor, when we speak of the modern decadence, is the social background. With the spread of education, and the rise of democratic ideals, and the discoveries in the departments of biology, eugenics philosophy and anthropology the staunch Victorian stable social order, born out of its material complacency and established social conventions and political order, gave way to despair and pessimism. (Dallas 7)

The next major factor contributing to the deterioration of values is urbanization. The good old agrarian way of life and economy of the earlier ages broke down and urbanization was on the increase. The industrial growth further quickened the urbanization of the country. Save the material prosperity that people enjoyed, it brought fresh problems like over crowding shortage of houses, escalation of crime and violence, fall in sexual morality, ugliness and ennui. The earth became grimy and environmentally polluted by the mushroom growth of industries. The smoke and noise made people sick. The inter relationship of the people was readjusted for the worse and individuals were alienated. This caused more complex psychic disorders. The concept of the modern welfare state became popular which began to play the role of a protector of the individual’s education, health and progress and even of Values (Lloyd 31). This religion aside and even obliterated it from the traditional mind.

Fear and anxiety in economic field also played a major role in changing the value system of the old order. New social forces became active tilting the balance. Unequal sharing of money and wealth increases in population and post-war economic depression created a sense of instability and fear in the economic field.

The next grave factor is the enormous growth of science. Of all the factors this is the predominant. The accelerated growth of science and technology caused great changes in the value patterns and the application of scientific methods to various branches of knowledge reoriented the intellectual outlook (Russell 19). Of these the most significant were the developments in the fields of astronomy, biology, zoology, sociology and psychology.

Far reaching were the results of these on the religious values. The society became increasingly secularized and the material prosperity fostered an agnostic attitude among the people. Darwin's theory gave a shock to the 'truths' of the Bible. Max Muller's studies on comparative religions gave a further shock to Christianity as a 'Revealed religion'. Such liberal humanism threatened to shatter Christian concepts like Atonement Heaven and Hell.

The spirit of critical enquiry is the next conspicuous factor. It is, of course, in the broad sense, a sure way to the knowledge of truth. Yet when it is carried to the extreme it is capable of causing great damage to the existing system of order. Such rationalism provokes men to question accepted social beliefs, tradition and conventions. Its impact was immediate on religious matters giving rise to skepticism and agnosticism. Regarding this increased knowledge Russell contemplates that knowledge which is power, is power for evil just as much for good, which means

unless men increases in wisdom as much as in knowledge, increase of knowledge will be increase of sorrow (121). R.A.Scott James also speaks of this twentieth century skepticism to put everything in its light and accept new age as new. This led to the outright questioning of the fundamentals of social systems and the moral system. This skepticism has been carried too far that it has ended up man in chaos, listlessness and footlessness.

When we study the impact of certain influences on values we must devote our attention to some modern philosophies also. In the recent past psychologists came out with their own discoveries on human nature and personality. However the discoveries were not uniform and were opposing each other. The Freudian's the Existentialists the Behaviorists, the Trait-factor theorists, the Gestaltists and the humanists are the most noteworthy among the modern philosophers. Among these Freud's views have wielded their strongest sway. "The study of Id, ego, the conscious, the unconscious and the sub conscious has revolutionized the concept of man's psyche" (Freud 24).

Freud and his followers Jung and Bergson gave a new interpretation of the "human behaviour in terms of the sex instinct" (Barcey 24) and this new approach gave a general approval to moral laxities. This loosing of sex taboos is being exploited by modern writers. Writers like D.H.Lawrence described sex in their novels in great detail and even T.S.Eliot himself could not decide whether he escaped the damage when he read D.H.Lawrence whereas Tholkāppiyar is quite natural in his outsourcing literature.

Next, the secular value system can be related to the twentieth century political awakening and revolt against authority. People of the modern age do not tolerate the

show of authority and demand decentralization of power as they see “power tends to corrupt, absolute power corrupts absolutely” (Penguin) as observed by Lord Action. Supremacy of any one race is opposed and socialism and internationalism are the political motto of the people. Oppression and domination of any one power person or principles of systems of values are revolted against. Writers like E.M. Forster as in his passage of India advocate cosmopolitanism and insist on mutual respect and understanding. Philosophers like Bertrand Russell wished for a united world under a World Government. (46). All these new speculations have looked askance at the tradition religious values and have made people look into a new direction.

Another important factor is the expansion of education. Literacy has gone up and people show a greater interest in the study of books. A vast number of books are published and with it many inferior writers have seized an opportunity to turn their mediocre talents into money. Art is sacrificed at the altar of profit. This has resulted in the reversion of values under secular principles.

Lastly, in the literary tendencies of the modern age, modern writers bring in realism in their work and concentrate on problems of modern life. This has been furthered by science. With its new inventions and discoveries it has given a materialistic twist to whatever is considered sacred and valuable in life. And the worship of machine coupled with the rapid growth of materialism has commercialized art, literature and music. That the modern age is branded as a commercial age is fully justified in the light of it. In the world of today, religion and spiritualism are on the wane. Materialism has won people.

The present age with its machinery has created a feeling of pessimism and frustration in them. James Joyce, Graham Greene, John Masefield are some of the men of letters who express their disgust at these. Though these writers make efforts to restore the positive values of the old times the quantity of commercial literature is on the increase. Yet poets like T.S.Eliot, W.H Auden, Cecil Day Lewis and Louis Mac neice wanted to redeem literature from the pleasure principle and restore its great stature. A quest for new values and a new vital tradition was launched as Tholkāppiyar was the backdrop and Eliot became its spokesman.

The various factors we have been seen so far in connection with their encounter with traditional values prove but one truth that man has gained a new confidence with hither to be never in such a degree. Man has come to truth himself absolutely and believes there is no need to go outside himself for his happiness and completion. He acts as a self appointed arbiter of values and believes that his reason can never be fallible in guiding him to assess the world.

This forces us to call in question the authority of man to judge things for himself without the aid of supreme standard of values. It will be a great help at his juncture to reflect on the following questioning quote by C.S Lewis from *Centuries of Meditations* “Can you be righteous,” ask Traherne, “unless you be just in rendering to things their due esteem? All things were made to be yours and you were made to prize them according to their value.”(Lewis 507).

Traherne doubts man’s hope to the righteous unless he is capable of justly attributing the right value to the right things. Now, how to render due esteem to things is the crucial question before us. A few more corollary questions like who is the

arbiter and where do we go far the source that will feed us up to come to right estimation of things, are also to be compulsory answered at this point. In other words the question is on what to depend for the light that we may not falter in our judgment of values.

This, now, necessarily takes us to the idea of good vis-à-vis conduct. C.S Lewis goes back to ancient Hinduism to study what being good meant. He recalls,

In early Hinduism that conduct in which men can be called good consists in conformity to, or almost participation in, the Rta' - that great ritual of pattern of nature and supernatural which is revealed alike in cosmic order, the moral virtues, and the ceremonial of the temple.(507)

Here, we see an answer for what to depend on for enlightenment to make the right approach to the question of values. It is in the form of a definition for 'good' or "being good" which is conforming to principles of "cosmic order", "moral virtues" and "rituals of the temple". Now it is to be understood that these are descriptive entities of one source as the idea of good cannot issue from three realities. It must necessarily issue from one source and these three principles constitute what is known as the higher principle or what we may call the ultimate standard of values.

C.S.Lewis makes an attempt to understand this in the following way: It is something we cannot neglect. It is the doctrine of objective value, the belief that certain attitudes are really true, and other really false, to the kind of thing the universe is and the kind of things we are"(508).

According to this, the higher principle is the sum totals of an objective value system which cannot be false and which is to be true when we deeply understand the

pattern of the universe and ourselves. Having thus philosophically explained, the idea of good which takes us to higher principles which ultimately is an infallible system of right values, can be further explained in terms of a criterion outside human limits. It must necessarily be outside man because, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, the various suggestions made by the different schools of philosophies to explain the human nature and thereby create a standard system of values and the attempts made by the modern cross current influences in this regard have ended in utter confusion of values. All these human endeavors have made only abortive attempts in showing the man the right way to the right things. They prove to be self defeating and therefore undependable are they. And because of this limitation they automatically get dismissed from our further search for the ultimate standard of values.

While pondering over this ultimate standard of values vis-à-vis the idea of good C.S.Lewis contemplates 'Tao'; the existence beyond existence:

As Plato said that the good was 'beyond' existence 'Tao' "it is a reality beyond all predicates, the abyss that was before the creator Himself. It is nature, it is the way, the road. it is the way in which the universe goes on, the way in which things everlastingly emerge, stilly and tranquilly, into space and time."(508)

In other words, Lewis means the ultimate standard of value is a supreme ontological entity which thus described in philosophic terms, has traditionally been represented by religion. Therefore, it is none other than religion itself which is the ultimate standard of values. And to this, everyone must conform as "it is also the way which every man should trend in imitation of that cosmic and super cosmic progression conforming all activities to that great exemplar. Now, at this point, we

must recall the verdict which Matthew Arnold passed on the enduring aspect of religion in opposition to that of poetry. Arnold said,

More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn
to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us...
and most of what now passes with us for religion and
philosophy will be replaced by poetry.(Arnold 2).

By such tendency, Arnold hoped for, “an ever surer and surer stay” (1) of poetry and does not believe in the everlasting aspect of religion because according to him “there is not a creed which is not shaken” (1). He only implies that Christian Values will not survive the competing value of poetry. Eliot expresses his shock at such emotional statements and points out the Victorian tendency to confuse the value of poetry, Culture of religion. Therefore he tells Arnold that “poetry cannot replace religion and nothing can ever replace for each has its value” in “The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism”, (SP 113). The value of religion is the only permanent thing which will find “an ever surer and surer stay” as it has been witnesses down the ages. Austin Warren also in his chapter, “Image , Metaphor, symbol, Myth” in Theory of literature speaks of the lasting aspect of religion and agrees with Eliot saying, “that poetry cannot for long take the place of religion since it can scarcely long survive it”(Wellek 192). The reason Warren furnishes for the superiority of religion over poetry is one of pure intellectual rationalism because he says, “Religion is a greater mystery; poetry the lesser. “Religious myth is the large scale authorization of poetic metaphor” (192). It is the wrong reason for the right thing. He claims permanence of

religion for the reason of its mythical content. He has missed what Eliot subtly discovered viz, the vital fact of the unchanging values of religion.

Before we move on to John Dewey who speaks about the ultimate reality to establish our point, a word must be said on the approach of value philosophy. The whole approach of the value philosophy comes to the nature of finding an outside value outside the human entity. Samuel M. Thomson in his *Nature of philosophy* elucidates it thus; Aesthetic values, basic to human art production, may be understood in terms of the relation of the complete to the incomplete. We do not ordinarily find fault with painting or a musical composition because it is unfinished. Yet the comparison of the actual work with what might have been done with such subject matter, may find the actual work an inadequate fulfillment of the possibilities of the subject.(Samuel 300). Any further study on these lines would contrast this post Second World War approach of the sociologists of Eliot -Lewis with the new functional sociologists.

John Dewey, the American reconstruction philosopher also in his lecture on *Changed Conceptions of the Ideal and the Real* in “*Reconstruction in Philosophy*” speaks of this Ultimate Reality. The secular forces that rationalize everything and infuse a sense of absolutism create, as we saw in the beginning of this chapter, an ever changing world of conflicting values. This is a contrast to the unchanging ultimate reality of which Dewey says:

From the contrast of the permanent with the transient arise other features which mark of the ultimate reality from the perfect realities of practical life. Where there is change, there is

of necessity numerical plurality multiplicity and from variety
comes opposition strife. Change Is alteration or “Othering”
and this means diversity. Diversity means division and division
means two sides and their conflict. (7)

Therefore, it is logical to find a non living ultimate reality which Dewey considers as “true being Since it is one, it knows only harmony and therefore enjoys complete eternal good. It is perfection.”(97)

Dewey further tells us how religion becomes the ultimate value setter. The classical philosophies discovered and defined all that is ultimate but religion reshaped it and gave the right form in its theology. The attributes and contemplation of the perfect being found their way through a variety of channels especially Neo-Platonism and St. Augustine and found their way into Christian theology, Tholkāppiyar is God fearing and great scholastic thinkers taught that the end of man is to know that True Being that knowledge is contemplative, that True Being is pure immaterial mind, and to know it is Bliss and Salvation” (99). We saw earlier Eliot and Tholkāppiyar feels the necessity of religion as the deciding factor for the greatness in literature. Here and now we must trace their interest in religion which became the very life of his history career.

Eliot’s conversion to Christianity, his vigorous search for Truth, his idea of Christ, his ripening in his belief, his expressions in his work, his monolithic idea of religion and literature, his spiritual struggles and search for the true faith and church and his idea of religion and culture all speak aloud his conviction that religion is the ultimate value setter.

Eliot's life and works show there is an evolution in his attitude to religion. Like any young man he wondered at the complex world which believed in things beyond what religion can afford. As he mellowed he converted himself to Christianity. This orthodox decision which we find from Tholkāppiyar surprised those who believed no more in religion because according to them religion was something "in which modern intellectuals no longer believe" (Wellek192).

Therefore Eliot's conversion to Christianity was a cause of surprise and even scandal to many of his contemporaries and can still appear inexplicable to readers impressed by the iconoclastic modernity of his early poetry (Bergonzi_110). It is not merely in later poetry there is a positive orientation towards religious experience but even his early poetry "was pervaded by a lament of loss of faith" (110).

Like any true seeker of Truth, Eliot was groping in his world of doubt, uncertainty and futility and ambivalence. He could not come to grips with Christianity and the "Jesus of Faith" (Lee 1). Unlike a conventional Christian, he searched for the "Jesus of temporal or secular history"(1), to possess a living faith to find a meaning in his beliefs. At the end as he ripened in his age, wisdom and experience, it dawned on him that Jesus was divine and who required no other proof of his divinity beyond the New Testament. Ever since, Eliot's writing became Christian in character as he could not "see that poetry can ever be separated from something which I should call belief" (111). Later, contrary to what he held, Richards claimed to have detected a "complete separation" (111) of his poetry from all belief in *The Waste Land*. But Eliot denied such a separation and said, "doubt uncertainty futility etc, seen in the poem are not revelations of faithfulness but are merely a variety of belief" (111). Such, faith is

found in Tholkāppiyam in the ways of Tamil's ordinary way of living at the Post eve of the wedding day.

“If the earth encircled by the sea along with the unattainable and glorious Heaven is placed on one pan of the scales and if this day of exquisite joy found in union with the beloved is put on the other, and if the two are thus weighted, the former would not match the glory of the latter. How delightful is the day of union!” (101).

Naccinārkkiniyar interprets the passage of Tholkāppiyam referring to the hero's expression in context of union (146, (190).

The first line “*Karanaththin amaindhu mudindha kalai*” is taken to mean thus : “After the two kinds of ancient rites and the rites prescribed by the *Brahmin (aiyar)* are properly done and finished, abstaining for three nights from union, and going to bed (thus alone) to appease the *anror* and finally at the end of the day-time on the fourth day. By *anror*, the God of the Moon, *Kandharvar* and *Angi* are meant.

The second line “*nenju thalai avilndha punarcckikannum*” means “ at the time of the (actual) union coming after the union experienced while in love and after the three days from marriage marked by absence of union, in order to remove the intense longing”. This actual union comes on the fourth night after marriage.

Here (i) absence of union for three days (ii) *anror* the God of the Moon, (iii) *Kāndharvar*, *Angi* and (iv) the fourth night are all detail introduced by Naccinārkkiniyar in his commentary. Of course he has not done without forethought. The next part of this verse contains the following lines:

“*Allalthira arvamodu alaiyaccolluru porujin kannum*” (146 Porul (191)

While interpreting these lines, the commentator feels that he has done the spadework necessary for explaining them in his own way. He says as follows: “The hero may also indulge in detail expatiation while in union with her to appease her longing and sorrow caused marriage, when she does not know the reason why the hero abstained from union so long. Thus, he explains at the time of union” and he continues to “apart for the God of the Moon; the next for *kāndharvar* and the third for *Agni*. On the fourth day she is offered to me by *Akkini*”(192) for his pleasure. This is how the Vedas explain it. Thus the hero gives expression to his joy, trying to redress his beloved’s sorrow.

Now the archetypal belief arises as to how hero of Tamil land would think of accepting a bride whom he knows to have been enjoyed by many Gods or deities and heavenly beings for three nights after marriage. The woman of ancient Tamil land were strictly following the code of chastity and it is nothing sort of cruelty to suggest this that the heroine enjoyed union with her lover before marriage (while in love); then she is said to be in union with three different supernatural beings for three nights and then she is said to have been passed on her husband on the fourth day. This explanation is not merely out of place but also seems to be ridiculous, as it shows nothing but ignorance of the Tamil ways of life.

This alternation in judgment results from a desire to introduce the Vedic sanctions in Tamil literature. Some are proud of this interpretation and say that the ancient Tamils learned civilized ways of life only from the followers of orthodox vedic religion. Naccinārkkiniyar himself says in an unguarded moment that this is some thing new to the Tamil ways of life. He says that the instance for these

marriage rites can be given only from his own times was he ignorant of the fact that there was no question of offering the bride to anybody-be he a God or a heavenly being –expect the bridegroom on the night of the marriage.

Now, at this stage, it is vital to find out whether Eliot's belief was orthodox since Tholkāppiyar or modern because it will let us know of his religious convictions. As said previously, Eliot does not see that poetry can ever be separated from something which he should call belief. If some do not like the term "belief" think it an orthodox affair, he cannot help it for there is no other term to what he possesses. He says his Christianity need not be "inevitably orthodox"(Bergonzi 111) and he hopes that it will probably continue to modify itself "into something that can be believed in or at last his own views had developed sufficiently to permit him to accept Christianity"(111). In 1927, he became a baptized Christian in the Church of England.

The spiritual struggles of Eliot are of great significance to us in establishing why he considers religion indispensable to make literature great. Eliot's spiritual struggles and faith finding are similar to Cardinal Newman's. The latter wrote his famed "Lead Kindly Light" at a time he was experiencing conflicting spiritual questions. He invokes the divine guidance to take him into right and true faith. *He Apologia Pro Vita Sua* is a record of what struggling conflicts he was contemplatively passing through in his journey from the darkness of confused values into the light of truth. Similarly Eliot in his "Journey of the Magi" and "A song for Simeon" processes his inner spiritual struggle. Unlike Newman, Eliot in these poems reflects on the advent of Christ, which is seen "as involving a painful rather than a joyful transformation of attitudes" (112). "Ash Wednesday" and "Four Quartets" are also

poems revealing his intense spiritual reflections. Part of Eliot's spiritual struggle was the search for the true faith. A good idea of his search for the true faith and his conclusions on religious matters becomes essential for us they affect his reflections on life, literature and criticism. Eliot felt "His conversion was not a sudden transformation but the seemingly inexorable ultimatum of process" (113). Such a transformation is true of a conscious and conscientious Christian thinker. While speaking of such a thinker he says "He finds the world to be so and so; he finds his character inexplicable by non religious theory; among religion he finds Christianity, and Catholic Christianity, to account most satisfactorily for the world especially the moral world within"(113).

These observations clearly let us know of Eliot's religious belief. Like Newman he is inexorably committed to the dogma of incarnation and overcomes the deem of doubt. What he opines of Pascal's faith can be said his own which is highly passionate and ardent but passionate only through powerful and regulated intellect. It must be stated here that such a type of unflinching faith has transformed, Eliot, the man, the poet and the critic. It must be noted that unlike Pascal who wept tears of joy at his conversion (113).

Eliot took it more a matter to do with his intellect rather than his sentiments. According to him such sentimental thrills would be crippling in a believer who would be an intellectual artist and critic.

This only shows that Eliot's faith is not a sporadic phenomenon but a mediated poised conviction. It is needless here to speak of its depth in his works

which implicitly appeal to reconstruct the wasted world on moral and religious values with Christian faith as the basis.

From this, we can clearly see that Eliot's idea of religion is of the highest kind. He does not believe religion to be an idle ideological dogmatic bulk having nothing to do with an individual's social or cultural life. He conceived it in its entirety of the highest and noblest value system having the final formula for human salvation.

After the Second World War we find an enormous growth of the structural approach to any discipline. Religion has really suffered a set back in the hands of structuralists. The discoveries of G.S.Fraser tended to show that religion is a structure of purely human necessity. But the functionalists have demonstrated that there is a very valid way of looking at nay human phenomenon. This is known as the functional approach.

Eliot seems to follow the functionalist's approach to religion though the structure of religion has been used by him very thoroughly as the structure of his poetry. Thus the function of religions as a source of dynamism is very clear in Eliot. The social function of poetry about which Eliot talks quite often merges with the functional approach of religion in all critical attitudes.

What is remarkable about Eliot's approach is that through the wings of poetry he seems to have a premonition of the great changes that had come about in the realm of sociology of religion. Durkheim and others looked upon religion as the by product of social life and paved the way for the study of religion as a structure. There came about a whole force of opposition to such ideas and more and more sociologists realized that religion is to be studied in its dynamic aspect as a force of change, in

short in its function approach. Eliot seems to insist on this idea of dynamic function of religion. He does not relegate religion to the state of a boneless structure as earlier sociologists did but gives it a life force (Paul 129). To put it briefly Eliot goes by the functional aspect of what religion does as opposed to the structure, of what it is. The more meaningful among the two is the functional because we know a mere passive positive being is not more valued than an active positive action. All great men have emphasized the positive action for the development and growth and salvation of mankind in preference to mere existence or being.

When we try to establish religion as the ultimate standard of values we must necessarily try to see the relationship between religion and culture. It is commonly believed in the closeness of religion and culture and wanted to be practical by applying religion to our daily life because he believed only such a cultural application would complete the service religion intends to do. When we say that the literature is the criticisms of Life, we can not avoid the discussion of the life of the people in the study of Tholkāppiyam concerning the literature. It is to be borne in mind that Tholkāppiyam is a code of life as well as a grammar of literature. It is understood that the religion found in Tholkāppiyam is the religion of the poets, humanism, and that the philosophy is the philosophy of living well, being useful to others. Ancient Tamils reveals their beliefs in Tholkāppiyam is “Have faith in God and serve others” denotes their faith over the omnipotence relates to note that it was Eliot’s habit to think of religion much in terms of culture. He had understood the intimacy between religion and culture and believed religion could not separate from culture, but if it was the religion of a nation would lose its social value. Because of this there is the need

for an intimate relationship between the national church and the national culture.(117). The Roman Catholic Church also in its centuries of accumulated wisdom and experience, later emphasized through the epoch making Vatican council II Eliot's view of the need for the intimacy between a national religion and its culture. Neither the religion nor the national culture should find itself alien at the meeting point. They should cohere. This need for coherence is important when we think of establishing social values and creating literatures because, according to Eliot, literature is a product of the interaction between religion and culture. Eliot speaks of it in great detail in his "Notes towards the definition of culture." The tightness he expected to exist between religion and culture can be more clearly understood in his opinion that in any culture as the animating principle is religion which can be seen, as the WHOLE WAY OF LIFE OF A PEOPLE, from birth to grave, from morning to night and in sleep, and that way of life is also its culture"(158). Such enculturation is essential to reap the fruits of religion and to establish a non conflicting society which under an ultimate system of values, live in harmony and peace and therefore in happiness and above all IN TRUTH WHICH IS THE ULTIMATE END OF ALL HUMAN ENDEAVOUR.

Chapter V

Conclusion

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Tradition and Orthodoxy have to exist together if a morally stable literature is to emerge. Eliot's and Tholkāppiar's persistent concern for their art genius and their essentiality on religion were virtually the main forces that led them to the sphere of the 'auditory imagination'. "Language and literature are fundamentally one, Speech gives rise to writing, granted. But once writing has come into being, it stabilizes, mould it, give it a more pleasing form, endow it with a richer vocabulary" (Pei 265). Being conscious of this fact, T.S. Eliot and Tholkāppiyar have written their works as ever monumental, which deals with science of literature.

From the studies of words based on the texts of Tholkāppiyam, we know the state of language during the age of Tholkāppiyar. Tholkāppiyam itself as a whole may be considered as a literature though it deals with the Science of Language and the Science of Literature.

Its divisions into three books, each containing nine chapters, make it a perfect work of art, with an exquisite symmetry of pattern. The verse, Tholkāppiyar has chosen, is the blank one which resembles *Āsiriyaṃ* is one of the four main divisions of poetry. It is not the 'Sūtra' (formulae) form of Sanskrit. There are rhymes and alliterations in almost all the verses. When we go through the verses the rhythmical order captivates our mind, and makes us forget that we are studying a book of grammar.

Tholkāppiyar has a new technique in communicating ideas. He expects the reader to have what he has read in the previous pages in his memory. So, when he enjoins a rule and he repeats what he has said already. He says that it is quiet natural in his verses 222, 265, 275 in '*Eḷuththu*'. This brevity is one of the chief characteristics of poetry, which enlivens the reader. If literature is to deal with the experience of the author, Tholkāppiyam may be considered as one which deals with the experience of Tholkāppiyar. The subject matter of Tholkāppiyam is nothing but his experience of Tamil language and literature and the life of Tamils. It is an intellectual experience. So, Tholkāppiyam is to be considered as a work of literature- Pure and applied.

Ancient Tamils held the view that the study of the Tamil language must result in the study of literature which would in turn guide the people to the life of pleasure. So they called the literature as '*Poruḷ*' means - which cared for in life and the subject of life.

Literature is the finest flower of language and most enjoyable form of art loved by the learned. "No literature; no life" seems to be the motto of the ancient philosophers of Tamil Nadu. To them the final aim of language study is the study of literature and to know life through literature, for literature is the initiation of life. Therefore Tholkāppiyar has dealt with the science of literature in the third book as a corollary to the study of language.

We have found that Tholkāppiyar has dealt with (i) form, and (ii) content. We have examined this with illustrations, the details of the kinds of literature *Aham* and

Puṇam. Now we deduce the following principles of literature from the detailed analysis that all literatures fall into two major divisions – *Aham* and *Puṇam*.

Aham and *Puṇam* have seven kinds of divisions each. It is said to be those works which deal with love and marriage and *Puṇam* to be those which deal with all matters other than love. The subject matter of a poem will be concerned with *muthal*, *karu* and *uri*. *Muthal* is time and space. The origin of time and space is not easily found out. So they are called the first. *Karu* is said to be those which belong to a particular region. Fourteen things including God and food are mentioned in verse 18 which belongs to *karu*. *Uri* is said to be those actions which evolve love affairs. So literature is concerned with the people and their life with reference to their surrounding. Nobody is to be mentioned by the proper name in *Aham* literature. There are two kinds of similes – *Uḷḷurāi* and *Enai* - employed in the literature. In *Puṇam*, words are allowed to be used to denote the meanings other than those which they ordinarily denote. Beasts, birds, trees and the inanimate objects may be said to have spoken and acted as human beings in verse 196 of *Porul*.

The function of literature is to create feeling in the hearts of reader of hearers. Such feelings are grouped into eight, each having four sorts in the verses from 251 to 259 which Eliot calls it an 'auditory imagination'. The lover and the lady-love are main characters in *Aham* literature. They are portrayed to be equal in nativity, family trait, strength, age, and the means of enjoying love, chastity, graciousness, understanding, and wealth. They must not be portrayed of having jealousy, crookedness, wondering, slander, harsh word, and carelessness in duty, laziness,

thinking highly of their family, indulgence in pleasure ignorance, forgetfulness and mentality of comparison. When describing the course of secret love, *pārppan*, *pāngan*, *thōli*, *sevili*, husband and wife are the characters to be employed to make speeches. When describing the course of wedded-love, *pānar*, *kūththar*, *viṇali*, *paraththai*, *aṇivar*, *kandōr* and those of secret love are the persons to make utterances.

The literature is expected to aim at the achievement of three main objects in life : *aram* (virtue), *poruḷ* (wealth) and *inbam* (Pleasure) and it alone stands as the main principles of literature to be followed by the poets in the making of literature.

Literature is termed as ‘*Seyyuḷ*’ in Tholkāppiyam. *Seyyuḷ* means that which is composed. Now it denotes poetry only. In the view of Abercrombie, the word poetry, is understood that it may very well stands for whole. For poetry is the essence of literature; in poetry, what whole business of literature the communication of pure experience in language, is concentrated to its utmost intensity. Whatever is true, on general grounds, of poetry, will be true of literature as a whole and whenever our theory speaks of poetry, it will be of poetry as the type of the art of literature. This statement holds good for Tamil *Seyyuḷ* also. So, *Seyyuḷ* in Tamil came to denote poetry alone in the Post-Tholkāppiyar age. *Seyyuḷ* seems to be the equivalent of the English word composition. Tholkāppiyar says that the constituents of composition are thirty four (313(223). From his statement it is clear that the composition appears to have these thirty four constituents even before his time. So the form of literature had been well-developed and had reached its perfection as an art only by Tholkāppiyar.

Those who made these compositions were called the poets of great fame. They were neither bards nor wandering ministers. The word '*Pulavar*' meant the person who was a scholar in the art of composition and in any branch of science which was useful to humanity.

Tholkāppiyar uses another word '*Yāppu*' to denote the composition in verse 390 in *Porul*. '*Yāppu*' means that which is built or made. This word denotes exactly the form of literature. He says that the forms of literature are of seven kinds which are '*pāttu*' (poem), '*urai*' (prose), '*nūl*' (the systematic treatise), '*vāymōli*' (the book of morals), '*pisi*' (the book of riddles), '*angatham*' (the book of satire) and '*muthusol*' (the book of proverbs) in *Porul* 391.

Tholkāppiyar has given an elaborate description of these forms in the chapter '*Seyyul*'. It is mentioned as ten kinds of rhymes and their nature in the chapter on Composition, he points out that the scholars says that there are thirteen thousand seven hindered and eight rhymes in accordance with the traditional grammar in his verse 413 of *Porul*.

Among the seven forms of literature '*pāttu*' denotes metrical forms of limited lines. By metrical form, it is divided into four kinds which are '*vēnba*', '*āsiriyaappā*', '*kallippā*' and '*vanjippā*', each having different melody. '*Pura nilai*', '*vāyurai*' and '*seviyārivuru*' which are name by the content they express, have the metrical form of '*venba*' and '*asiriyam*' in verse 473 of *Porul*. '*Kaikkiḷai*' is known by the content and '*paripādal*' by its form of verse (*Porul*501).

Content of literature also falls into *Aham* and *Puṛam* divisions. The life of the people in their various activities will be the content of the literature. The themes of poems are named on the basis of the content. In *Aham* literature, the names of the poems are only five which are *Kuṟinji*, *Pālai*, *Mullai*, *Maṟutham* and *Neythal*, each will have a different theme. Theme is called '*thuṟai*' in Tamil. The expression made by any of the characters who are mentioned to have the right of speech-making is called '*kilavi*'. Tholkāppiyar has mentioned the places of making expressions which belong to *Aham* in the chapters, *Ahaththiṇai*, *Kalavu* and *kaṟpu*; and those which belong to *Puṛam* in the chapter *Puṟathiṇai*. The verses numbers are, 36,39,40,41,43,44,50,100,101,102,103,107,111,113,114,115,146,147,148,149,150,151,152,153,154,155,157,168,170,172 and 177, point out the occasions and the persons to make expressions (*Kilavi*) which form the themes of literature of *Aham*. The verses 58, 60, 64,67,68,72,76,79,90 and 91 describe the themes for composing the poems of *Puṛam* literature. All literature is to be secular in their content and to be pleasing in forms. Thus the forms of literature appear to be manifold and they are known either by their form or by their content. All literature is to be secular in their content and to be pleasing in forms.

Tholkāppiyar has allotted a full chapter called '*Uvama Iyal*' which is a chapter on '*simile*' to explain the use of simile in literature. He gives the descriptions of animal and vegetable kingdoms in *Maṟapu Iyal* as he expects all poets to be fully conversant with their surroundings.

Besides, it is the most important from Tholkāppiyar's poetry; the poems consist of dramatic monologues. Tholkāppiyar enumerates certain illustrative contexts in the various aspects of 'aham' and 'puṣam' poetry where the character could speak and reveal a dramatic moment. It makes clear that in this particular period, no narrative poetry or epic but only a series of dramatic monologues. This is one of the most important aspects of the literary theory of Tholkāppiyam. At the seventh century, Dandin realized the importance of this literary theory about poetic anthologies and therefore spoke only of two kinds of poetry, the poetry of anthologies and the epic poems. As in the words of T.P.Meenakshi sundaram, "Many a gem of purest ray serene may be hidden in the sea of experience, and many are the hidden ways of the subtle artists, working on these valuable gems. Many like the epic poets are great in weaving beautiful patterns, immortalized in the pearl necklace of a queen or in the diamond diadem of a king - the varying dispositions of the many faceted gems satisfying the varying tastes and vanities of the rich. Some like the Cankam poets are great in carving out glistening and living forms of the Divine Dance [Ratna Sabhapati] or the Female Beauty, in each individual gem, infusing and vivifying the dead stone, with their life breath and mystical vision, making it, in short, the Absolute. How can this Absolute be reduced to the relative in a pattern?" (63). Tholkāppiyar has mentioned *Vanappu* as the last of the organs of a literary composition contemplates some narrative poetry or literature. Literature is composed in the ordinary dialect of the common man and it has common verse and prose. The other kinds do not contemplate any continuous narrative (Tholkāppiyar, *sutras*). *Vanappu* comes at the end as a vague remembrance of a forgotten tradition of an earlier age.

An important aspect of literature is an attempt by the poet to capture the poetic essence of the dramatic moment in the form of living phrases and poetic metaphors and similes which function as the life of the verse. It is what compressed in poetry. This paves way to become the names of such verses and often takes the immortal names of the poets themselves. This idea is depicted in '*Netuntōkai*' and '*Pāttuppāttu*', the dramatic and poetic compression is felt. This provides a great place being given to suggestion. Figures of Speech consist of various kinds of metaphors and similes. There is '*ullurai*' '*uvamam*' which is an implied metaphor (*Porul* 526-546,547-554 (246-248). Apart from it, other kinds of suggestions were not only of the meaning but also of emotions and ideals. '*iraicci*' is a general name given to this suggestion.(229 (209)

The emphasis of Tholkāppiyar lays on poetic sentiments or *meyp̄pātu* or *Rasa* in Sanskrit and what Eliot calls 'auditory imagination' is to be understood. He speaks of eight *rasas*- *nakai* (*hasya*), *uvakai* (happiness), suffering (*soka*), *vira* (heroism) physical, moral, intellectual and spiritual, *ilivaral* (*jugupsa*) or a kind of shuddering at meanness; *knodha* (anger), *bhaya* (fear) and *adbhuta* (wonder) (*Sutras* 1197). Tholkāppiyar clearly points out the various emotions which play an important part in the various dramatic moments of *Aham* poetry (*Sutras* 1207-1214).

Tholkāppiyar focuses on this '*rasa*' or '*meyp̄pātu*', thus showing the importance of these poetic sentiments by a description at the appropriate time and place of the context. When we happen to understand such dramatic monologues, it becomes familiar with the conventions of such poetry. For interpreting such a verse, it

is necessary, as emphasized by Tholkāppiyar to know “who the speaker is, to whom it is spoken, its dramatic context in *aham* or *puṇam*; the time implied therein as a looking back or as a looking forward and the various strata of meaning and rich suggestion because such poetry believing as it does in compression should have recourse to an elaborate theory of suggestion and *meyppādu* or *rasā* or *poetic sentiment*”. (1441 etc., 1445 etc., 1452 etc., 1457 etc., 1460, 1462 etc.)

The theory of poetry in Tholkāppiyam deals with the sounds and the meanings together form one united whole in the aspects of form and content. It seems to be vague since it is connected to criticism but a careful analysis and understanding reveals the great organic theory of poetry as conceived by Tholkāppiyar.

We conceive an idea of Eliot’s what he calls ‘auditory imagination’. “The other organs of the verse like the meaning made clear by the context, the elaborate ramifications by allusions and suggestions glowing into life, by sweet remembrances as described at length by Prof. Richards, the lexical traditions of words and their significance, the elliptical construction or the yearning for the predicate after every pause in the continuous flow of the sense making the whole a continuity, and the retrospective and prospective constructions as looking backward and forward to bring about a well known organized unity, are but ordinary grammatical themes. Various ways of the reader’s understanding of a poem and an usual grasp of the meaning are utilized for swaying the mind, “thereby heaving up with the crest of the poetic wave and ebbing away with its trough, and his hypnotized intellect, reasoning

with the music and meaning of the poem, and thereby, becoming one with the theme”(Meenakshisundaram 55).

The other components of the verse are its “speaker, the persons addressed, the time and place, the effect, the sentiment, the generality, the particularity and the universality of the poem, the last head reminding us of Jung's archetypes and the unconscious racial and individual memories”(57). All these are under the head of meaning and subject matter. These form the poetic theme in “concrete and specific reality, vivified by its glowing emotion, appealing to every heart by its universality or archetype, becoming of momentous value, as the expression of a fundamental mode of intrinsically ennobling human behaviour; its value carrying with itself the imprimatur of personal experience” (59).

The value of a work of art consists not merely in the progressive organization of impulses for freedom and fullness of life according to Richards, but also of the open recognition of amoral sanction which is, in the old phraseology, revealed to the artist. The eight-fold facades and the import of the parts are attempts at telescoping these various strata of poetry, viz. the sound, the music, the significance, its sweep and development, the emotion and the final experience. Everything, thus, appears to be of great importance in the final make up of the poetic personality of the verse, reflecting the personality of the poet.

Hence, Tholkāppiyar seems to be aware of the ephemeral nature of the world on the basis of which he preaches morals to the world (78,79 *Porul* 170). There is no

mention of any religion or sect in Tholkāppiyam. Therefore, it is to be concluded that the religion found in Tholkāppiyam is the religion of the poets, humanism, and that the philosophy is the philosophy of living well, being useful to others. It is clear that the ancient Tamils way of life as revealed in Tholkāppiyam is “Have faith in God and serve others”. Thus it is clear that Tholkāppiyar has the concept of having not only ‘form and content’ but ‘the way of life’ as religion in his mind in making of literature always great in the Tamil literature.

Thus, in the sphere of the poetic drama, as Tholkāppiyar, Eliot has advocacy for permanent values in life; his adherence to the sense of tradition in literature; and his awareness of an artist’s moral obligations to society did not permit him to indulge in any aristocracy in art. Eliot’s contribution to the drama is marked by his distinct achievements. In the first place, he has expounded the dramatic theories, which give an insight into his own understanding of the subject. Secondly, he has written plays, in which we find his theories in operation. In the words of H.L.Sharma,

His preoccupation with a playwright’s endeavours to use the drama as an instrument of socio-religious communication; his regard for the classical methods as practiced by the great dramatists of the past; his enthusiasm for the creation of a suitable form of verse for the drama, and his concern for integrating drama and poetry together into the organic web of the rituals are some of the basic tenets. (62)

Eliot’s plays have not only restore the lost link between religion and drama, but have also become instrumental in making the drama an integral part of the contemporary tradition in art and literature.(162)

The dramatic theories of Eliot are influenced by his personal attitude towards life and problems. He is aware of the moral uncertainty of the world and as a writer; he is ever-conscious of his duties and responsibilities to his people. And so, Eliot upholds his view on moral and spiritual values. At the religious level, he accepts the Anglo-Catholic faith and at the literary level, he advocates strict adherences to the sense of tradition.

Eliot's whole approach to the drama is conditioned by his belief that man's present predicament is the direct outcome of a gradual process of spiritual devitalization and he wants to make efforts for his spiritual salvation. Such efforts, however, demand from man an unflinching sense of discipline, which religion alone has the power to cultivate. In this sense, the plays Eliot has written are legitimate products of his abiding faith in religion as a means of redeeming man's spiritual glory. These plays, though religious in every sense of the world, never teach religion in the form of a dogma. At their best, they may be regarded as genuine shifts into spiritual awareness in as far as their themes uphold the basic truth, which sustains Eliot's world-view, the primacy of the supernatural order over the natural world. And thus Eliot conveys the 'reality' of the Christian explanation of the world and the validity of Christian values for society.

The Murder in the Cathedral deals with the martyrdom of Becket. The play is divided into two parts which are connected by the 'interlude' of the Archbishop's sermon in the morning. Even in the sermon itself, Thomas points out the special significance of the Christian Mass. He conveys that it is both the celebration of the joy of Christ's birth and the sorrow of His death. Thomas differentiates God's peace

from the peace as the world knows it and draws the analogy between Christ and the martyr. He closes the sermon with his newly won insight into martyrdom-which the martyr is not made by his own design but is by God's decision. And the situation continues when Thomas is threatened by the Knights; he answers that he is ready for martyrdom. And the events in *Murder in the Cathedral* are presented as 'neither tragic nor comic, but Christian' (Smith 102) achieves glory as he suffers martyrdom.

Christ sheds his blood "for the remission of human sin and the martyr, in return, sheds his blood both in repayment for and in re-enactment of Christ's sacrifice"(109). Blood is a multiple symbol in the play and the women of the Canterbury view it differently-as a symbol of good and evil, guilt and glory. And thus Eliot makes Becket a martyr by making him submit his will to the will of God, which inspires even the ordinary men and women of Canterbury. Even though the play *The Family Reunion* deals with the contemporary world, the goal ultimately attained is the same. The normality of the play is continuously disrupted. In the surface action, the family (and audience) is gathered in expectation of one kind of reunion, but finds another kind of union portrayed.

characters such as the aunts and uncles,
who begin by speaking the most ordinary prose
sentiments, break into choral chants; scenes, such
as that between Mary and Harry, which
begin in the expectation of romance or
'love interest', end in rejection of human
love in favour of the love of God (117).

The total effect was intended to be the presentation of a modern counterpart to the universal experience of religious purgation. The demands of Harry's reunion story disrupt the reality of their world. His reunion is a family reunion, not only in the sense that 'he is helped to understanding by Agatha and Mary' (125) but also as he is taught that 'he must acknowledge the truth about his parents and become reunited with his past as a means to self-knowledge and ultimate union with God (122). He is made to realize that part of his burden of sin and guilt is a family heritage. Eliot portrays Harry as a sick-souled person who is ready to take up the cross and who willingly surrenders his will to His will. Eliot projects Harry as leaving behind all his work and will and becoming a martyr to achieve the ultimate end. Agatha is presented as a representative of the spiritual world and Celia in The Cocktail Party, we have one more spiritually evolved person. Except Sir Henry Harcourt-Reilly the other characters in The Cocktail Party are in grip of triangular love. As the play moves on, Alex and Celia are in league with the doctor and have arranged appointments for Edward and Lavinia and for Celia.

Celia is convinced in her consultation with the doctor that her real love affair is with God. She is sent to Sir Henry's "Sanatorium" for which he found Edward and Lavinia unfit. Then the action takes place two years later just before another cocktail party given by the Chamberlayness. Everyone is presented this time except Celia who achieves martyrdom while serving the natives of Kinkanja. As a representative of the Negative way of Christian sainthood and martyrdom,

Celia also suffers spiritual death and rebirth,

But in reversed terms. In the discovery that

She had loved an imagined creation of her
Own making, she suffers the death of her
Hopes for a life in the world, but in her
Acceptance of the Negative Way she is reborn in (128)

In her martyrdom she suffers physical death but achieves eternal life, just as she achieves another kind of Christian marriage in the union of the saint with God.

Thus Celia's death acts as a spiritual catalyst to all those present that lives had been involved with hers. Through Sir Henry's vision of the 'triumph' of her death, Edward and Lavinia gain a new insight into the other path which they are not equipped to follow. Peter has a glimmering perception that he might some day share her path.

Thus Eliot's plays Murder in the Cathedral, The Family Reunion and The Cocktail Party dramatize the theme of martyrdom, not as a privileged prerogative of a few superior souls like the archbishop of Canterbury but as the birthright of every individual, especially of this century, in which there has been a disintegration of spiritual values and man feels torn inside and thoroughly alienated. Again martyrdom, as dramatized by Eliot in these three plays, is not achieved merely through renunciation as in the case of Celia. Eliot's idea seems to be that man need not leave hearth and home but must face life where he is, as Beckett faced the knights, surrendering his will and the noise of reason so that His will might be done. Each man carries the sin of humanity as Harry carries the sin of his father and the only way to expiate sin is to give up the past (guilt) and the future (dreams and fears) and live the present under His will. Thus each person is a potential martyr. We see Beckett,

Agatha and Reilly playing the roles of the Guru guiding the tortured souls to salvation. Beckett teaches by example the Women of Canterbury en masse, Agatha guides Harry, and Reilly initiates Celia and the Edwards to the life eternal. Celia, Lavinia, Edward and even Amy definitely get a grasp of the message and are shown as prophets in the making. Thus Eliot has thrown open the door of martyrdom to all alike. Eliot's concept of martyrdom makes him truly eclectic and deeply humanistic.

The seeming Contradiction:

Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation are directed
not upon the poet but upon the poetry. (SE 49)

T.S.Eliot in his "Religion and Literature" has said "The greatness' of literature cannot be determined by literary standards though we must remember that whether it is literature or not can be determined only by literary standards. Austin Warren feels "the work of literature is an aesthetic object capable of arousing aesthetic experience" (Wellek 241) and asks "Can evaluate a literary work entirely upon aesthetic criteria or do we need, as T.S.Eliot suggests, to judge the greatness of literature by extra aesthetic criteria? (241).

Eliot's statement seems unbecoming of "a major figure in the development of formalistic criticism" (Scott 179). Eliot takes in the question of the judgement of a literary work. Eliot came under the influence of Pound and Hulme and "announced the high place of art as art, rather than as expression of social religious, ethical or political ideas and advocated the close study of the texts of the works themselves" (179). He applied his view of poetry as an "independent organism" (179) in many of his critical essays. He drew the attention in Blackmur's words "to the facts in the

work under consideration as they are relevant to literature as such" (179). His historical pronouncement in *Tradition and the Individual Talent* that the poet escapes into the poem from emotion and personality took the critics away from biographical examinations into scrutiny of the craft of the poem. "He was in short concerned to formulate a kind of criticism that would be free of the pursuit of extrinsically historic moral psychological and sociological interpretations and free to concentrate on the aesthetic quality of the work"(180) .

From what we have seen so far we understand Eliot a staunch supporter of formalism pays much attention to the aesthetic part of literature. According to Eliot's formalistic principles the judgement of art should be intrinsic, not extrinsic. That is to say that no external measurement is necessary to evaluate a work of art.

The second part of Eliot's evaluatory prescription is in full agreement with his art- oriented formalism. But it is the first part that provokes a controversy. It is about the question of greatness. Such question of greatness brings us to standards and norms and leads people to see a contradiction in Eliot. The critic who said, "Honest criticism and sensitive appreciation is directed not upon the poet but upon the poetry" (SE 73). In his epoch making "*Tradition and the Individual Talent*" with a thorough objectivity has also, to the shock of his own followers uttered several statements in his critical essay "*Religion and Literature*". Eliot believes that great literature is judged great by "explicit ethical and theological standards" (Scott 43). Elsewhere he says "our religion imposes our ethics, our judgement and criticism of ourselves, and our behaviour towards our fellowmen"(47). Yet in another place he says, "What I believe to be incumbent upon all Christians is the duty of maintaining consciously certain

standards and criteria of criticism over and above those applied by the rest of the world ...” (53). While speaking about maintaining the standards Eliot exhorts us this way: “we must tirelessly criticize it (literature the best of its kind) according to our own principles”(54).

All these are statements going against Eliot stood for in criticism. We know his views on impersonality of poetry and the poetic process. Poetry according to him is not inspiration but organization. It means the greatness of organization decides the greatness of the poem itself. In other words the greatness of a poem does not depend upon the type of pleasure it gives or the quality of moral development it effects, but on the order and unity it imposes on the chaotic and desperate experiences of the poet. It only reiterates the point that a good poem or a great poem is perfect organization and organization is everything. If so why should Eliot bring in extra-aesthetic criteria like “religion” to be applied to literature to make it “great” is the question the pro-intrinsic evaluators would like to ask? They may argue that it is a clear contradiction. Eliot who said “the progress of an artist is a continual self-sacrifice, a continual extinction of personality” (SE 73) seems to contradict himself by recovering personality from surrendering itself and denying a continual extinction of it by asserting that religion ought to be applied to literature to make it great. What becomes clear, in this analysis, is that religion here is equated to personality.

But a closer look at Eliot’s statement will reveal that the contradiction is not a real one but only a seeming one. It is a contradiction to those who fall to look at the fact that Eliot has proposed a dichotomy in his statement for the sake of analytical convenience. It was necessitated by the lack of a criterion to distinguish the ‘ordinary’

from the 'great' in literature. As a responsible critic it was his moral obligation to state what he felt in serving excellence and truth., now it must be seen that Eliot by such a statement wants us to understand that norms of literature found within literature is simply criticism and norms found outside literature to decide whether it is great or not is theory of criticism. Thus one is intrinsic and the other extrinsic. Without these two, criticism cannot survive to maintain definitions and standards.

To those who argue that there is a dichotomy in Eliot, it is clear, religion is personality and therefore this is a clear contradiction for, formalism or structuralism proposes to emphasize reader art relationship and the assessment of work thereby. The work of art itself is the only source available to a critic to evaluate it. No extra-aesthetic criteria could be made the yardstick. As Elder Olsen puts it, "The form is the end of everything else in the poem would be found explicable in terms of it" (217-18).

It must be observed that those who accept the indispensability of Eliot's "historical sense" (SE 71) also see that what Eliot means by tradition has much to do with religion as religion is the great part of tradition. It is a vital thing too. And we know what Eliot means by tradition it is not the dead past but the living past. Now what is the living past? It is the past that is relieved as part of the present as it cannot be separated from the present. Having defined what tradition is, we have the next searching question of what it is made of. Tradition which is the living past is a composition of all human experiences. Now, when we speak of literature, we speak of the best of the human past and human experiences that are evidently those about religion which has passed into the present as a major influence and archetype.

Such an awareness will enable the literal formalists to see that Eliot has used the word “religion” in a wider sense, Religion is not, as some believe something vague, a set of mystifying arbitrary principles, or a separate entity altogether and that it has no impact on one’s character and that one can easily do without it. Again it must be added that it is not an orthodox bulk meant for unthinking people.

According to Eliot ‘religion’ is lived experience, and therefore it has inevitably become an archetype in literature. Those who see the dichotomy have difficulty in correlating impersonality theory to outside world. But, for Eliot and the like religion as said above is a ‘lived experience’ and therefore passes into ‘artistic experience.’ ‘Religious emotions’ become really ‘art emotions’ because this protagonist ‘lives’ his religion; it is his lived experience. Only those who look upon religion as something alien to human sensibilities see religious emotions are life emotions and these emotions are not part of one’s aesthetic sensibilities.

Therefore, according to this understanding, there can be no art without this life experience passed on to it. Eliot’s “Journey of the Magi” is a superb example to illustrate this point. It describes the difficult journey of the three wise men from the east on their way to see child Jesus. It is symbolic of the hesitation that people show to undergo hardships for the sake of higher things in life like religious experience. The difficulties of the Magi experienced during the journey, realistically illustrate that religious experience is nothing but life experience and the spiritual experience, as some imagine, does not belong to a world of one’s making.

The winter and the cold, the sore-footed camels and the rowdiest act of the camel drivers the hunger and the temptations to give up the journey and return to the

world of summer girls bringing sherbet are experiences coming out of real life situations.

Life looks meaningless and void and existence purposeless. We are tempted to give up life and wish for escape or death. Such real life, situational hopelessness is illustrated in the poem: the art.

With the voice singing in our ears, saying

That this was all folly (SP,11(19-20).

The Magi journeyed all the way to have vision of the blessed birth of the Lord, but

Where we led all the way for

Birth or death? There was a Birth, Certainly,

We had evidence and no doubt. I had seen birth and death

But had thought they were different this Birth was

Hard and bitter agony for us, like Death, our death. (11(35-39)

The bitter tragic shock is “Birth” is their “Death”. Thus, we see the fact that religious experience grows only out of life experience, and the aesthetic experience is very well governed by or formulated by life’s aesthetic experience in the poem. Almost all the images that bring out the religious hardships are the poetic image. The revival of life for the Magi, which represents the life-death proposition, is beautifully structured in the images of the running brook, the wine, the horse and the men-at-dicing. Thus religious- aesthetic nearness is brought out admirably. The religious message that this life is our death is brought out in the images that are very well structured in the Fryean paradigm, namely, the mineral, vegetative, the animal and the human. No one can deny this truth that is witnessed in the great poem

which is not a mere religious poem but a poem of life. It makes the point clear that religion is nothing but life, and that religion is used by Eliot in this wider 'life-sense'.

When one becomes aware of religion in this wider sense there should be no difficulty in correlating the impersonality theory to the outside world. The second difficulty of who's which see the dichotomy is a perfect misunderstanding of what formalism is. According to them, formalism has nothing to do with the 'idea' – content' 'world'. It is wrong because formalism does not mean literary structure in the vague. It has to bring into form certain material. It actually sees the closeness of 'matter' 'content' 'subject' which constitutes 'world' that is 'form'. As Warren sees it, "instead of dichotomizing 'form-content', we should think of matter and then of 'form' that which aesthetically organizes its matters" (241). This is a point for us for a close study. What follows is of great value to us as we are trying to annihilate the supposed exclusive nature between matter and form. It is to be observed that a successful work of art, materials is completely assimilated into the forms what the world has become "language" (241). This goes to illustrate that there is no 'form' without matter. This draws our attention now to the phenomenon of complete assimilation. It can be recognized only by an intelligent pursuer. Those who fail to have a perfect understanding of formalism (they are the charlatans rush to conclusions) take language final in a literary work which, they do not see, cannot exist without the perfect assimilation of matter and language. This literary process or, creative process, may be explained for a better understanding in terms of the biblical phrase the word was made flesh" (John 1.14). Here the language 'word has become

world' proves a perfect assimilation of possible truth. This truth must be accepted by all when we speak of such delicate distinctions.

Now we clearly see that mere language or form is inferior in stature as there can be no form without matter. Again we may maintain that the nature, intensity and complexity and greatness of form depend upon the 'highness' or 'greatness' or the 'most valuableness of the matter. If the perfect assimilation is between inferior world or matter and language or form we have an inferior type of literary piece produced. On the other hand, if the assimilation is between superior matter and language great literature is produced.

Now having cleared the misunderstanding of what actually formalism is, let us go on to establish what role religion can play in making the content belong to the highest order of existing matter.

Warren in his chapter "Evaluation" in *Theory of Literature* defines what matter is in a literary work of art. He says 'The materials 'of a literary work of art are on one level, words on another level, human behavior experience, and on another, human ideas and attitudes"(241)

This definition enables us to count on certain tangible factors to take us a good way into relating different levels of life to material of art. And these different levels are as Warren puts it doubtlessly, 'human behaviour experience', 'human ideas' and 'attitudes'. Now the question is, are these integral components of a work of art or extra aesthetic criteria? In other words, are they intrinsic or extrinsic factors in a literary work? We must say they are both. Any literary work of art ought to have these simultaneous components. But what is to be borne in mind is that their very

nature decided the rank or degree of excellence of the work. If the human behavior experience, human ideas and attitudes are of a higher quality so is the status of the literature with which it is produced. If they are low, the work suffers from mediocrity simultaneously the question is what is great literature or what makes literature great? As envisaged earlier, the high quality of 'human experience,' 'human ideas,' and 'attitudes' make literature great. At this moment the crucial question is what gives greatness to these. It is convincingly RELIGION.

Religion looking at it in the broadest possible way is the sum-total of all great human experience and reflections drawn from all quarters of human behaviour, ideas and attitudes that promote the well being and happiness of man in the highest measure. Having thus identified religion we must pass on to responding to the next vital question of why religion is given the highest place in the order of excellence? The answer is one that is quite commonsensical. It is quite commonsensical because it is the every day experience of every one. The day-to-day realization of man is that of all things in this world only religious values stand high in fulfilling the human needs in a way that make man whole and hold him together as preordained by the super principle (most of us wish to call it 'God') or 'Life Force that governs the whole universe from the dawn of creation.'

This is fairly an answer to the pressing question why Eliot who advocates formalistic principles to judge work of art seems to contradict himself by prescribing an extra aesthetic criterion like religion to make literature great. This is supported by Blackmur also in his Enabling Act of Criticism where "like Eliot he admits that non literary standards aid in determining the greatness of literature"(Pritchard 259).

Another reason for Eliot's stand is one of saving literature from spiritually and socially damaging influences. It is needless to say the primary and most ennobling task of a true critic is to set up high standards for the works of art and perpetuate them so that mankind does not degenerate. It is his moral responsibility to act as the guardian of the highest values which mankind has cherished and save them from any degenerating influence. Here we are not all concerned about the professional critics who do not make serious efforts to dedicate themselves to such high ideals.

It is not difficult for us to realize from our common experience that religion is a pure principle which saves life and literature from the degenerating pleasure principle which contaminates mankind making taking it to chaos and sorrow. Literature is a powerful weapon capable of arousing intense feelings in us because of its aesthetic content and powerful organization. The "autonomous realm of art" or "the aesthetic experience" (Wellek 239) is a realm and experience capable of positive or negative effects depending upon the quality of its art material. Therefore it is dangerous to love the autonomous realm of art, existing on its own without the standard check. It reminded of Plato who wanted to banish the poets who, according to him, were 'divinely mad' possessing the pleasure (purely aesthetic) principle. He had realized such an unchecked principle would be a destroyer of all cherished values. He had the learning principle which means that the literature produced must have the light to guide mankind to higher levels of life.

As Plato had rightly said, the whole world must rise against a principle (like the pleasure principle), which besides being a potential value destroyer is an agent of all misery and sorrow. The world of chaos and sorrow is not anybody, even Eliot

himself was against it. He is a staunch oppose of all that is low and substandard. He mercilessly rules out its presence in literature lest it should be a destroyer of values.

This proves Eliot's complete realization of the enormous power of aesthetic values and their impact. With such a realization he is fully justified in saying that literature should rest in the care of religion to create a sound and sensible world. Eliot is further justified when we look at his view in the right of Aristotle's observation that man must be "trained in ordinate of affections" or 'just sentiments' and that he must taught to "like and dislike what he ought". According to Eliot, this in an 'ordinate affections and just sentiments' and the rights on likes and dislikes have traditionally been undertaken only by the religion.

Thus using religion as the central principle in judging the greatness of a work of art can be fully justified. Religion is, thus not an extra aesthetic criterion in the broadest and high-serious sense and what illuminate true of it is that it is being used in the service of literature.

For those who take religion in a narrow sense it is discipline which, with its grave watchful taskmaster's eye monitors life. To them discipline always means 'beating' a kind of a negative entity. We must know what discipline in the real sense means. It means help service have to accept emotionally and imaginatively the service religion does.

Now, it is clear that those argue literature is a substitute to religion has made it a profession. T.S.Eliot attacks Matthew Arnold's impulsive view on poetry which according to him will enjoy supremacy over all systems of value and philosophy.

Another claim is that of Wordsworth's paganism which instructs men to go to Nature and to consider it as god. As soon as a little earlier the professional attitude to literature that it is self-sufficient and that there is nothing worth our seeking outside it is a gross error, the error in this view is self evident as literature which is born of religion as we have earlier proved cannot claim autonomy.

Next a word must be said of the contemplation of the pure being and beauty. The contemplation of the pure being is the ultimate aim of all human beings according to John Dewey. Aristotle and the scholastic philosophers St. Augustine and St Thomas Aquinas have earlier insisted on this. It is not merely a religious attitude; the aesthetic attitude is also the same. This can be explained in terms of beauty. Beauty is not a palpable object whose dimensions can be mathematically measured. It is in the eye of the onlooker as Wordsworth in his poem "Straight and Crooked" says that ugliness and beauty are not in things themselves, but in the way one looks at them. Beauty neither is in the matter colour form etc., but in the way one contemplates it. Aristotle's idea of beauty centre on 'accidence' and 'substance' which includes shapes colour taste feel of touch etc., beyond the accidence there is something which makes the thing itself. Beauty is the substance not accidence this can be better explained in the theory of 'transubstantiation' Aesthetic attitude also is the contemplation of pure being. Such a contemplation has led St Thomas Aquinas observe Beauty 'Quod Placet' that which pleases.

All these pronouncements are effects to go outside the limits of human beings. Apart from Eliot and C.S.Lewis, Christopher Dawson also insisted that great values are outside man. In such a context pope's secular dictum, 'Man is the measure of

everything' proves absurd and false. At the same time the extreme views as 'you should not tell a man I love you because you are child of god' of Forsters, Virginia Woolf and Clive Bell of the Bloomsberry Group of British Humanism may be reconsidered.

To conclude, any work of art possesses a quality. Eliot and Tholkāppiyar, on common people's belief in God emphasize the indispensability of extra-aesthetic criteria in a work of art to decide its greatness. This verdict is seen in relation to the demands of formalistic principles of literary criticism, which takes the discussion on to 'form-content' definitions and distinctions and their closeness in literature. Supposing the work suffers from mediocrity, the question arises on what would make literature great? This leads to the universal thought that the high quality of 'human experience' 'human ideas' and 'attitudes' which means altogether 'the way of life' makes literature great. At this moment the crucial question is what gives greatness to these? It is convincingly RELIGION which is THE WAY OF LIFE.

Thus religion as the central principle in the selected works of Eliot and Tholkāppiyar is fully justified either in creating and criticizing a work of art. This religious spirit of T. S. Eliot and life spirit of Tholkāppiyar inspire and move the literary world towards religion, which consistently evolve themselves to be the central principle in the creation of literature. Further the central principle sets itself as an example for value and evaluation in elevating their work of art to the level of achieving **Greatness**.

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